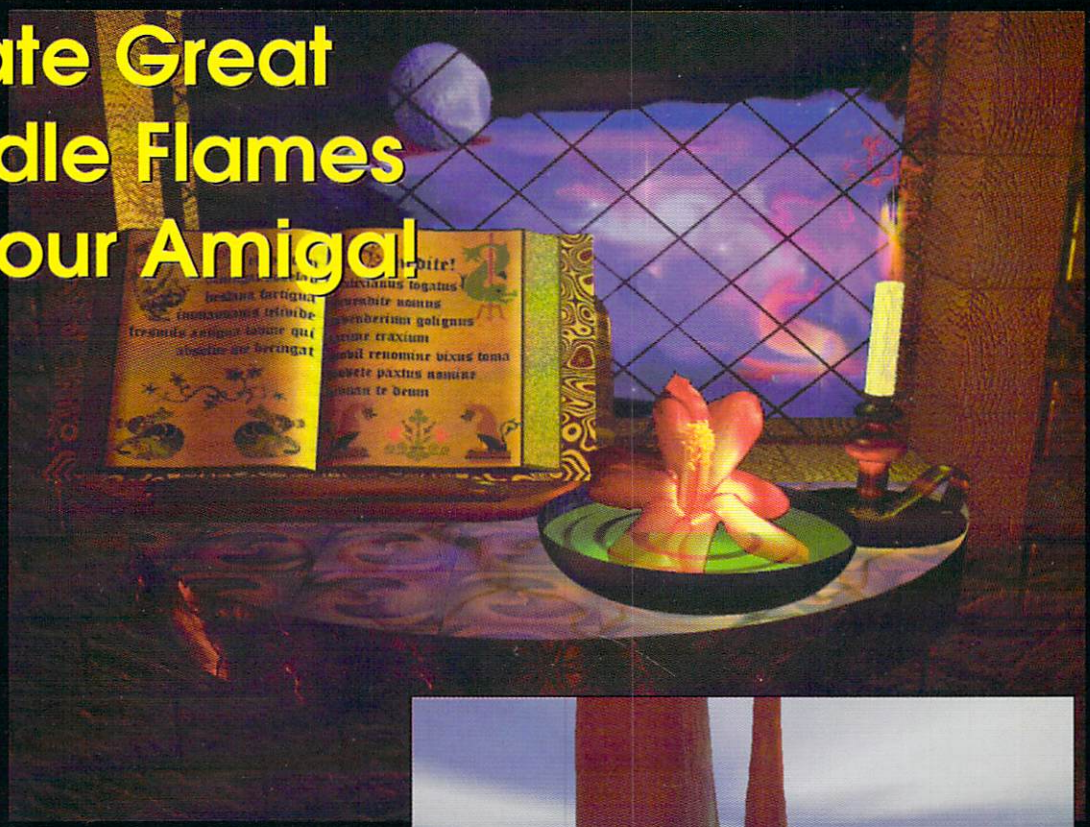
Business App: Balance Books with your Amiga!

Amazing COMPUTING™ / AMIGA®

Your Original AMIGA® Monthly Resource

Volume 11 No. 3 March 1996
US $3.95 Canada $5.95

Create Great Candle Flames on your Amiga!



ScapeMaker 4.0

Create 3D Virtual Worlds

PC-TASK

Run MS DOS programs directly on your Amiga

TurboCalc V3.5

TurboCalc 3.5 is the powerful successor to the program TurboCalc 2.0, which defined a new standard for spreadsheet analysis on the Amiga®.

NEW

TurboCalc 3.5 uses an enhanced, easy-to-use user interface, utilising numerous innovations such as Drag & Drop for copying/moving or filling with the mouse, even easier selection of functions, freezing of sheet titles or the displayable status row. A multiple Undo/Redo of a variable depth reverses the effect of erroneous data or commands and can save much work, as can the Autosave and Backup options. Thanks to the new object concept which allows insertion and printing of charts, texts, drawings, IFF-images ... directly in the sheet, sheets can now be more effectively created and designed. Charts (e.g. the new 3D bar and pie charts) can be directly placed beside the appropriate number sequence. Longer texts can be compactly accomodated in a cell comprising several lines. The formfeed visible in the sheet as well as the print preview function assist in achieving optimal layout on screen, saving both paper and time.
All this can be committed to paper with using improved print routines, or be integrated in your text processing software as IFF graphics or text (via file or clipboard).
A database mask is now available to allow easier management of your TurboCalc databases.

The most significant enhancements:
- Objects (chart, text, drawing, picture...) can be directly inserted into the sheet and have a macro attached, and also be printed in the graphic mode.
- Cells may contain several lines.
- Drag-and-Drop for moving/copying/changing the size of blocks by the mouse.
- Multiple Undo/Redo
- Chart module vastly expanded (new chart types, 3D, Auto-Refresh, ...).
- Preview for the printing of graphics (from OS2.0 on).
- Formfeed visible in the sheet.
- Data-Mask for an easier input/display of data records.
- Status row displayable with short online-help.
- (Maximal) number of columns increased: now up to 18278 columns can be used (A..ZZZ) [together with up to 9 999 999 rows]
- Clipboard support for easy data exchange with text processing programs.
- Sheets can be saved as IFF-images (e.g. for an easy export to text processing programs).
- Autosave (every x minutes, alternatively the last version will be kept).
- New Import & Export-Formats: Excel 4 (XLS) and Lotus 123 (.WK1/.WKS) both can import formulas, the xls-filter even keeps most of the cell formatting.
- Fast and easy access to the last used projects via "Smart-Open"
- Encrypting sheets using a very sophisticated cryptograhic algorithm
- Complete support of OS2.x/3.x (Locale support, memory-pools, AmigaGuide).
- reqtools-Filerequester is supported!
- Amiga-Guide help file can directly be accessed from TurboCalc.
- Requester for inserting functions/macros now with categories to allow an easier and faster access
- Many new functions/macros.
- TurboCalc-Libraries for an easy expansion of TurboCalc with external functions, macros, objects, etc. (Documentation to program own libraries included)
- Numerous general improvements (e.g. saving the cursor position, special colors for every sheet, "hidden" password inquiry ...)

$69.95

GURU-ROM V6

Years of experience, technical know-how, and competence from the world's best Amiga software and hardware engineers are condensed in this penultimate product. It makes it possible for the user to productively and comfortably use SCSI, without sacrificing performance, risk of incompatibility, or waste of resources.

$79.95

Stefan Ossowskis Schatztruhe and Ralph Babel, author of the well-known »Amiga Guru Book« and long-standing former system software developer for GVP, the American company known for its high-quality hardware products, present:

Guru-ROM Version 6
The final update for all GVP SCSI host adapters!

Together with exhaustive documentation, the »Guru-ROM« enhances each Series-II host adapter in many decisive and for the serious user essential features: Universal: a SCSI driver without compromise for all Series-II host adapters and all »Combo« and »G-Force« accelerator cards for the Amiga 4000, 3000, 2000, 1200, and 500. This ROM module, which has been considerably extended in its code and feature set, replaces all previously distributed driver ROMs.
Fast: unparalleled transfer rates of up to 3.5 MB/s raw (Zorro-II limit), 3.1 MB/s measured with »SCSISpeed«, 2.4 MB/s measured with »DiskSpeed« - even on a stock 7-MHz 68000-based Amiga! All the while, the CPU typically retains 80% free processing time. Always maximum performance through the automatic selection of the currently optimal transfer mode (DMA, buffered DMA, PIO).
Multifaceted: supports all device types defined in the SCSI standard, such as hard disks, CD-ROM drives, streamers, scanners, and magneto-optical devices.
Compatible: complete support for the RDB standard resulting in trouble-free autoboot, automount, and the exchange of devices and media between two computers from Amiga OS 1.3 through 3.1.
Flexible: disconnect/reselect, synchronous transfers, and parity checking can be enabled separately for each device (even for devices without an RDB). Also complete write-protection (useful for kiosk applications and for virus protection) is possible.
Intelligent: maximum compatibility with nearly all hardware and software through special handling of all known firmware bugs of the most popular SCSI devices and DMA hardware bugs in the A3000 and A4000, workarounds for internal errors in the WD SCSI chip, as well as special modifications to account for defective application software.
Upward-compatible: completely compatible both to the SCSI-2 as well as to the SCSI-1 standard, thereby providing the broadest support for all devices on the market including those still to come.

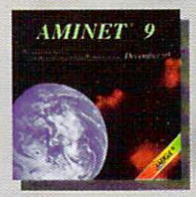
Aminet 10

An update to the world's best-selling Amiga CD-ROM-series has just been released. Aminet CD10, dated February 1996, contains more than 1 gigabyte (uncompressed) of software in thousands of archives. Since the release of Aminet 9 CD more than 500 MB new software has appeared. The current edition has a special focus on fonts. More than 1.000 high-quality-fonts were included. The excellent user-interface has also experienced further improvements and we are proud to present you a new CD-ROM of superior quality for the Amiga.

$19.95

25 MB	Business software
54 MB	Communications
25 MB	Graphics & sound demos
27 MB	Development software
5 MB	Disk/HD tools
22 MB	Documents
111 MB	Games
52 MB	Graphics software
18 MB	Miscellaneous
233 MB	Music modules
54 MB	Pictures & animations
43 MB	Utilities

Aminet 9



Still available! **$19.95**

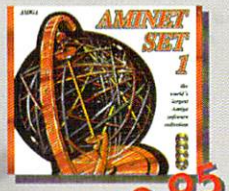
Aminet Set 2

AMINET SET 2, dated November 1995, consists of approximately 4 gigabytes of software in 12.000 archives.
Whether you like applications, games, communications or programming, the SET gives you all you need. Easy to use index files and search facilities make accessing it a pleasure.

NEW **$43.95**

120 MB	Utilities
270 MB	Documents
40 MB	text software
75 MB	Business software
630 MB	Pictures & animations
170 MB	Graphics software
150 MB	Miscellaneous
630 MB	Graphics & sound demos
250 MB	Games
110 MB	Development software
10 MB	Disk/HD tools
5 MB	Hardware related
840 MB	Music modules
150 MB	Communications
30 MB	Music software

Aminet Set 1



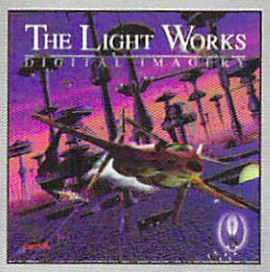
Still available! **$43.95**

Subscription

Subscriptions to the Aminet series are available. There are expected to be six releases per year, and the subscription is actually for 4 CD's, regardless of when they end up shipping.
Aminet - subscription: $59.95

XiPaint V3.2

XiPaint is a leading edge, 24-bit paint program. It's suited to the demands of novice and expert alike, and within a short time, you too will be able to produce colourful and creative art in 16.8 million colours. This version of XiPaint provides a professional paint program at an unbeatable price/performance ratio.
Overview of Features: · Diverse paint functions including colour, contrast and saturation adjustment · Mask, outline, recolour and fill functions · Airbrush with adjustable spray functions · Light-table function for manipulating montages and animations · Text functions with anti-aliasing using Compugraphic fonts · Support for a variety of graphic formats · Unlimited Undo · Diverse manipulation of alpha channel · Supports many graphic cards · Layers to combine different projects · ARexx port · Drag & Drop colours · External filter module · Extensive documentation · 60 textures, 50 landscapes, 30 other pictures and many fonts included.
XiPaint V3.2: $49.95



The Light Works

Raytracing is a fascinating area of computer graphics. Pictures from the computer, perfectly rendered, fascinate people all over the world. The Amiga was the first computer to be used for raytracing, and today it is still a leader, with many high quality programs. A real artist of raytracing is Tobias J. Richter from Cologne Germany, whose detailed objects stun people, especially his space ships of famous science fiction films which are used to demonstrate the capabilities of raytracing programs. Now available on CD-ROM for the first time as a complete collection, his objects are highly detailed and extremely realistic due to the application of complex surface textures of the models. Until now it was difficult to acquire these objects in order to create your own scenes or animations.
The Light Works: $34.95

FreshFonts II

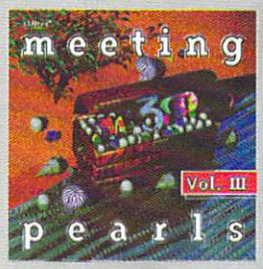
FreshFonts volume 2 contains 632 megabytes of fonts for almost any computer system. Most of the fonts are freely distributable, except for the Thienen fonts, which are exclusive on this CD. Each of these fonts is included in four different formats: DMF, Agfa IntelliFont, Adobe and TrueType. There are 231 font families on this CD (each containing of up to 8 different styles). They are classified in seven categories: Deco (63 families), Non-Latin (33 families), Pictures (16 families), Sans Serif (29 families), Script (36 families), Serif (36 families), and Thienen (19 families).
FreshFonts Vol 2: $29.95

TurboCalc V2.1 CD

TurboCalc V2.1 CD-ROM is the unique software solution that defines a new standard for spread sheet applications on the Commodore Amiga®. Experience its nearly unlimited capabilities in all relevant categories.
TurboCalc V2.1 CD-ROM: $14.95

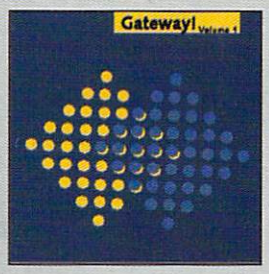
World Info '95

Your virtual guide around the world. Travel to places, you have never seen before, get informed about your next holiday destination beforehand, spend some time in the sun! Are you preparing for a geography test? Then you can find the info here! On this CD are information about all the 194 countries and about more than 700 cities, covering all sorts of subjects. Here is a short selection of information areas: Geography, Maps, Climate, Time- zones, People, Language, Religion, Food, Politics, Flag, National anthem (see & hear), Economy data, Environmental issues, Holidays, Cities, City Maps, Metro Maps. These areas are explained thou- roughly. Difficult definitions are explained (what is e.g. the tundra climate). In addition to this there is a massive amount of pictures from all over the world available. A little dictionary covering the most important languages is also there as a little bonus. It is easy and intuitiv to use. You can enter and exit at any time. There are extensive possibilities for searching. A printout of all information is no problem at all. Minimum system requirements: A computer with Mosaic or NetScape (e.g. Amiga, Mac, OS/2, Unix, Windows)! Recommended system requirements: One of the above computers with a screen resolution of 640x480 with 256 colours and sound.
World Info '95: $59.95



Meeting Pearls Volume III

The Meeting Pearls Volume III contains 650 MB of the finest FD software via a special user interface, which has been created to allow you to find the program of your choice with ease. The contents: 10 MB Packer, Cruncher, Archive Programs · 3 MB CD-ROM Utilities · 21 MB Communication and Network Programs · 5 MB Debugging Tools · 29 MB Development Tools · 13 MB Floppy, Hard Disk ans SCSI Programs · 8 MB Educational Programs · 9 MB Games · 35 MB Graphics Programs · 39 MB Internet Movie Database, Updated Version · 7 MB Midi Tools and Programs · 27 MB Mods · 12 MB Music Programs · 21 MB Pictures · 13 MB AmiTCP and more for Networking · 60 MB Documentation, CD-ROM Databases, etc. · 96 MB PasTeX 1.4 - not previous available on any CD-ROM · 15 MB Utilities · 30 MB HTML-Pages · Collections of datatypes, benchmark programs, icons, programs for amateur radio and electrical/electronic engineering are also included.
Meeting Pearls Vol. III: $13.95



Gateway!

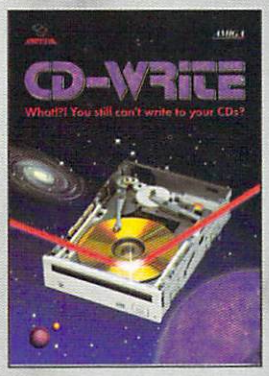
Gateway! offers NetBSD 1.0, a full featured UNIX-like operating system with both sources and binaries for the Amiga, i386, Sun 3, and other architectures. Go netsurfing with the large selection of supplied networking tools. Other supplied packages include a binary release of the X window system (X11R6) for the Amiga, with many additional clients, and packages such as perl, emacs, games, mail programs, and many megabytes of important text files such as RFCs and FAQs. A complete installation guide is available on the CD. There are also some AmigaDOS internet utilities, such as clients for AmiTCP and Envoy.
Gateway!: $22.95

NetNews Offline Volume 1

NetNews Offline Vol. 1 is the first disk of a new bimonthly published series of Amiga CD-ROMs which contains all Amiga-related newsgroups from the internet. Every volume features about 50.000 articles which contain hot rumours, important information about all aspects of the Amiga, press-releases, discussions and flame wars, ... A newsreader is included. NetNews Offline is the cheap alternative of getting in touch with Usenet.
NetNews offline Vol. 1: $17.95

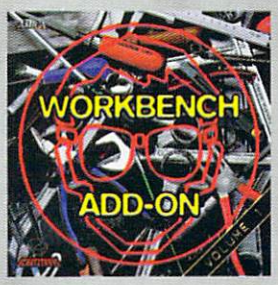
Gamers' Delight II

This CD contains 1070 games for the Commodore Amiga from differing categories. Action, Jump & Run, Card Games, Puzzles, Strategy Games - a whole range of computer entertainment awaits! Gamers' Delight will hold you captivated for hours and guarantees long-lasting pleasure. 70 games are commercial versions - no public domain & no demos! This CD can be run on any Amiga with CD-ROM drive,1 MB free memory and Joystick/Joypad.
Gamers' Delight 2: $29.95



CD-Write

CD-Write is based on a simple but ingenious technique. Because you cannot write on ordinary CD's using ordinary CD-ROM drives, CD-Write extends the Amiga OS in a fully OS compliant and completely transparent manner, to redirect modifications to CD's to a special area of your harddrive or other writable media. From now on you will be able to treat CD-ROMs like any other media, writing or deleting files, moving and snapshoting windows and icons, changing the icon tooltype fields, replacing icons with your favorite ones, rearranging directories, changing the default configurations of programs run directly from the CD-ROM, saving game high scores, etc. Minimum system requirements: Amiga 500, A600, A1000, A1200, A1500, A2000, A2500, A3000, or A4000 with at least 1 MB of RAM, OS 2.04 or higher, CD-ROM drive; hard disk recommended.
CD-Write: $57.95



Workbench Add-On Volume 1

The Workbench Add-On CD-ROM is the ideal companion to your workbench. On this CD you will not only find the best programs, that are available for the Amiga, but you will also get them ready-to-run from the CD. In addition to this there is an installer script that installs the desired programs to your harddisk.
The CD covers all areas of interest, all, the programmer, the user, the creative and the gamer will find what they are looking for. On this CD-ROM there are many shareware programs, some of them at a special price, if you get registered. There is e.g. Shapeshifter for 40.- DM (instead of 50.- DM), in addition to this there is a 50 MB Mac partition, so that you can start playing around with Mac applications right away. Then there is PowerPlayer for 20.- DM (instead of 30.- DM), there are, of course, loads of modules with it, so that you can try it right away. AmiWin, the new X11-server for the Amiga is available for $40, instead of $50. You can sa ve more than 100.- DM with this CD. Therefore you only have to send in the appropriate page in the booklet to the author of the program. **$29.95**

All products are available in your local Amiga shop or through national mail-order companies

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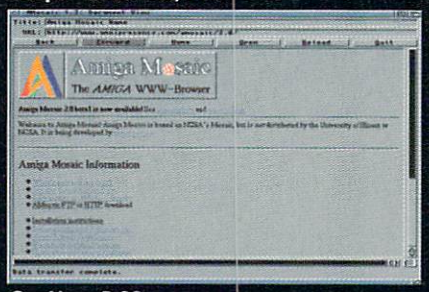
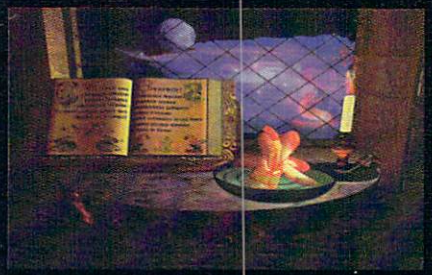


On-Line, P.29



Realistic candle flames, P. 34

10 New Products & Other neat stuff

TelevEyes/Plus from CeV Design, a new Amiga SX, a CDROM just for A1200/A4000 owners, a CD-ROM of commercial titles, all Kara Fonts on one CD ROM, plus a new Web site from MegageM.

13 PC-TASK

by Marc Hoffman

A software utility to run PC software on an Amiga? The Amiga OS is still superior in numerous ways but we are still required to deal with the MS-DOS computing community. PC-TASK offers an alternative to placing an Intel machine on your desk.

16 ScapeMaker 4.0

by Shamms Mortier

Combine the power of Digital Elevation Models from Vista Pro with the abilities of other programs to create your own 3D virtual worlds.

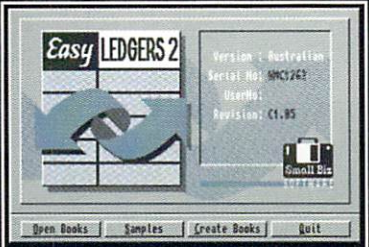
29 On-Line

by Rob Hays

Putting AMosaic to work on the World Wide Web, learning protocals, searching the hot new web sites, hints and tips, and more in this month's column.

34 Creating Candle Flames with Imagemaster and Aladdin 4D

Imagemaster is a program that has a durable history of innovative image-processing techniques.



New Column!

AMIGA in Business

Easy Ledgers

Afraid your Amiga can't count for beans? Try this accounting package that would make any bean counter look twice, page 42.

North American Amiga Dealer List

Can't find a local Amiga dealer? Check the current list of Amiga specialists in this issue—page 45.

Personal Commentary:

What Trees do they Plant?

Shamms Mortier asks us to do more than use our computers—make a difference—page 48.

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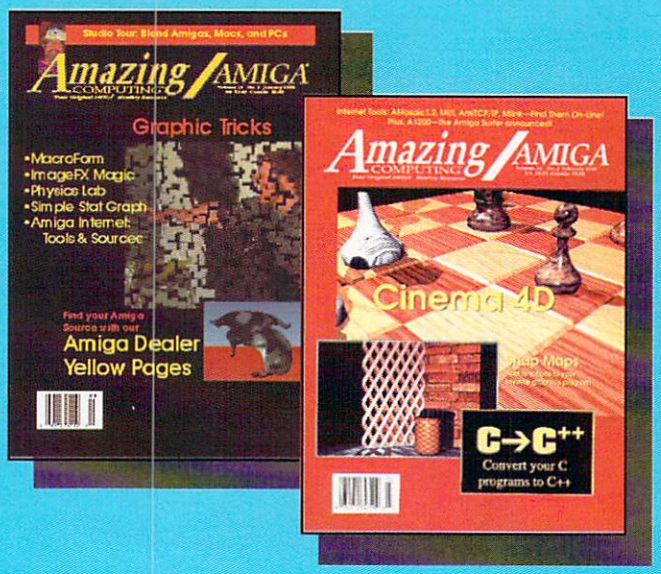

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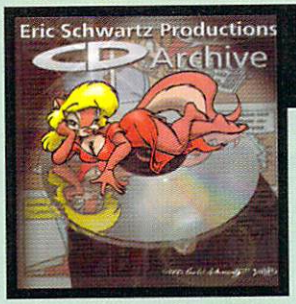
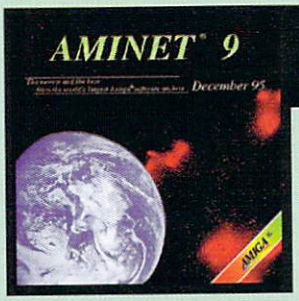


Eric Schwartz Productions CD Archive

A Real Bargain For $24.95

This CD provides a complete collection of Eric's previously released animations and artwork. Also included are several unreleased animations, dozens of pictures, Imagine and LightWave 3D objects and a special set of icons.



Aminet

Single CD Releases Only $19.95
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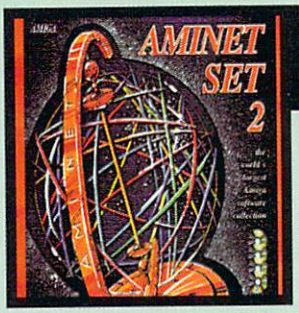
The world's largest collection of freely distributed Amiga software. User friendly access software makes the CD's a pleasure to use. Bi-monthly releases include a wide variety of programs such as applications, games, demos, pictures, mods, animations plus much, much more!



Aminet Set 1 & Set 2

Four CD Sets, Each Only $43.95

Aminet Set 1, dated January 1995, is the first "complete" Aminet archive on CD consisting of 4 gigabytes of software in 12,500 archives. It is a virtually inexhaustible reservoir of top freely distributable software.

Aminet Set 2, dated November 1995, picks up where Set 1 left off. It also consists of approximately 4 gigabytes of software in 12,000 archives, plus 300 electronic books from Project Guttenberg. Simple to use files and search facilities make accessing easy.

FantaSeas

Retail Price is $39.95

This portfolio Photo CD brings you the beauty and diversity of the oceanic world! Photo sites range from the walls of Grand Cayman to the Blue Corner of Palau. This two CD set contains macro shots of colorful ocean life as well as detailed photos of World War II wrecks plus much more. There are almost 300 24-bit images, each one presented in five different resolutions ranging from 192x128 up to 3072 x 2048 pixels. As a bonus, FantaSeas includes Portfolio Photo CD software for Mac and PC users.

Da Capo

Hours of Listening For Only $29.95
Mac Version Available for $29.95

Containing 1400 mods, da capo is "the" source for high quality music. Many releases are exclusive to this CD-ROM. Containing over 2000 high quality sound samples presented in five different formats, AIFF, AU, IFF, VOC and WAVE, da capo is uniquely sorted by sound and maintains example drawers.

GoldFish

Great Value For Only $19.95

GoldFish represents an effective method for users to maintain their "fish library" in a periodic manner.

Volume 3 marks a change in the series to an unarchived single CD format with a "user friendly" access system allowing most programs to be reviewed and executed from a centralized system.

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Editorial Content

Apple Computer in Decline, Escom loses 46 million Deutshemarks, Window sales off—What is going on?

Trouble in the world of computers—this past holiday season was not as bright as was expected. Apple Computer recorded losses which resulted in the ousting (fairly or unfairly) of their CEO.

And, while Bill Gates was quoted by the media as saying Apple would have to do a lot to turn around their downward spiral, he has not been quoted on why the Windows '95 operating system did not meet expected goals or what he intends to do for the millions of customers who are once again unsatisfied with Microsoft's large promises and small results. Many Microsoft users have grumbled that the large demands for memory and disk space have not been equaled by increased productivity. Some experts are saying that Windows '95 may be the reason computer sales as a whole were so far off this past year.

Even ESCOM reported losses of 46 million Deutshemarks at the end of last year. This final comment was from an Escom executive who was attempting to tell me why Escom and Amiga Technologies have still not put any money into marketing the Amiga in North America.

But Escom, Apple, or even grumblings from Microsoft's customers did not prepare me for the news of Wonder Computers.

Wonder Computers

A major disaster to hit the Amiga Market in early February was the demise of Wonder Computers. Our office discovered that the entire six-store chain in Canada has been seized. Unfortunately it is still not clear, at press time, why the seizure occurred or if Wonder Computers will be allowed to restructure. Even though, the effect on the Amiga market will be significant.

Wonder Computers had been on a roll. They had expanded and created new stores in a market where few others could survive. They were able to encourage a large amount of Amiga users throughout Canada to continue using and expanding their Amiga equipment. According to one executive at Ernst and Young, the trustee organization who is handling the Wonder Computers account, many Amiga users have already called the stores requesting information on who is going to handle product in Wonder's absence.

Aside from the impact this will have on local Amiga users in Canada, there is also a great deal of concern for what this will do to the array of products Wonder Computers has either revived or created for the Amiga market.

DesignWorks was originally created by New Horizons Software. However, New Horizons experienced severe growing pains just as this product was ready for the Amiga consumer and they were not able to properly launch it. The revolutionary drawing tool was never given its full worth. After New Horizons went into receivership, Wonder Computers purchased the rights to the product and through their software development division, Lazarus Engineering, they refreshed DesignWorks and began distributing it.

Wonder Computers was the exclusive distributor in North America of PC-TASK (reviewed in this issue on page 13) and DirWorks 2.1 from Australia. Of course Wonder Computers' original distribution agreements will no longer be binding, but what about the money the developers have lost?

While both of these utilities will find homes with new distributors, the developers who created the packages probably will not be paid for the software already in circulation. Dealers have almost certainly paid their distributors, and, if history is any guide, the people who shipped the packages to the dealer have either unpaid returns due from Wonder Computers or were Wonder themselves. Everyone loses.

Wonder as a Symptom

As mentioned above, Wonder Computers may be able to restructure and continue. However, without a good strong commitment by Amiga Technologies to this market, they may not be able to raise the funds to make that commitment. And worse still, they may not be the only ones who suffer this fate.

With the entire computer industry in disarray, it would be easy for Amiga Technologies to point to the decline in Europe and North American sales as a reason to withdraw and wait for things to improve. But, Amiga Technologies can't take that route because they have the very tool that will put them in an arena no one can match.

Solutions not Computers

The real test of the computer market is how well an application is accepted. Only rarely do consumers buy computers just for the computer.

When the Commodore 64 was in the midst of its hay-day, Commodore marketed (yep, they did know how to market then) the C64 as the computer students could learn from (as opposed to Atari 2600's). The campaign worked and a few more million of the C64s were sold. But, this is rare.

When the Macintosh was first introduced, it was characterized as the world's first $2500 impulse item. After Aldus released PageMaker on the Mac, the consumer had a real reason to buy the machine.

The Amiga was an anything machine when it was first released. However, videography did a lot to centralize the Amiga's abilities. After that, it was easy to point to the Amiga and go on about its video editing features. The only problem was that features like sound, animation, multitasking, etc., although important to a full video presentation, were not mentioned often enough for the Amiga's abilities.

If we want to sell the Amiga to this consumer audience, we must offer them a solution to their problems. That solution may well be access to the internet and the AMIGA Surfer mentioned in AC's last issue may well be the best hope for the Amiga.

Internet or Bust

It is a part of every news show, it has been mangled by congress, it has been maligned by the media—the internet, right or wrong, is the main story and the golden fleece at the moment. Advertisers place their homepage address in their print and television advertisements. Macintosh and PC magazines offer CDs for internet use on the covers of their newsstand copies. There is really no place to go in the US today without being hit by the internet. And the Amiga has a surefire solution for the market.

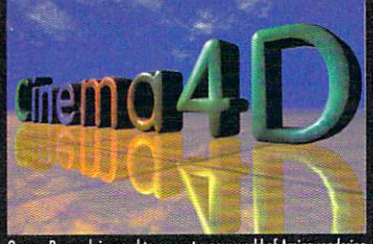
The AMIGA Surfer (announced last issue) is an off-the-shelf internet machine. The fact that it is a full Amiga 1200, has a library of software behind it, and has the ability to emulate the Macintosh and IBM is only secondary.

This $800 device is the right solution for today's market. It is now in Amiga Technologies' hands to produce, distribute, and market this device to gain marketing position while everyone is still wondering what happened to Christmas retail sales.

Rarely has a market had an opportunity, a tool, and a clear road. I hope someone goes with it. Not just because we want to see this market succeed, not just because we want Wonder Computers and others to be able to continue to supply Amiga users, but because, if everyone is going to travel the internet in a low priced—high volume machine, I want it to be an Amiga.

Sincerely,

Don Hicks
Managing Editor



Oregon Research is proud to present a new world of Amiga rendering and animation. Cinema4D is packed with powerful features that will satisfy the most demanding users. All this power with an intuitive easy user interface that actually helps you work!

Cinema4D provides a flexible multi-tasking development environment with powerful capabilities including window-based realtime interactive modeling directly in 3D, basic and complex primitives with uncountable variations, easy object manipulation, moveable tool, object and texture lists, user definable object hierarchies, MORE!

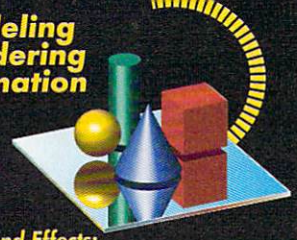
The Cinema4D animator breathes life into your objects and scenes, allowing you to effortlessly create your own reality. Whether your taskforce is docking with a new spacestation, or you're exploring around the darkest dungeon - with Cinema4D it's simple. With just a few mouse clicks you will have your objects move fluidly and realistically through time and space.

Cinema 4D's features include:

- Interactive real-time modeler, Edit directly in perspective
- Screaming fast rendering times,rendering always cancellable
- Moveable tool palettes, Keyboard shortcuts, Undo function
- Full support for graphics cards (Picasso, Retina, Merlin, Piccolo,etc)
- Imports and exports all common modeling formats.

Objects:

- User-editable object primitives
- Complex objects (mannekin, morph, path, skinned, lathed, extruded, fractal, displacement, sun, text objects)
- Fractal mountain landscapes; Unlimited object numbers
- Easily editable object hierarchy; Direct point editing
- Polygon and 3 spline style models; Scale modeling



Tools and Effects:

- Flexible tools for object manipulation (warp, jitter, bend, center, align, joining, distort, spin, smooth, extrude...)
- Modeless point and polygon editingFog; Phong shading
- Morphing, Explosions, Wind, Melting, etc.
- 26 light styles; Spot-, Sun-, ambient and colored light
- Extensive materials library (glass, wood, metal...)
- Texture and bump-mapping settings for color, transparency, reflectivity, displacement,specularity and luminosity.
- Unlimited expandability with plug in open architecture

Rendering:

- Screaming fast rendering, Optimized algorithms
- Rendering can be started separately - fully mulit-tasking
- Dynamic Antialiasing for best results

Professional Animation:

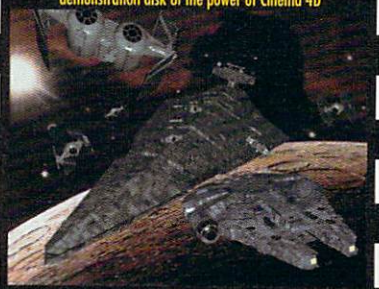
- Keyframe animation for objects and the camera
- Flexible Key-frame settings (for position, size and attitude)
- Point & Click Path-based animation for objects and camera
- Hierarchical animation without further editing
- Inverse kinematic animation for character animation
- Camera animation (position, target, focal length, bank,zoom)
- Material animation (color, transparency, specularity,etc.)
- Texture animation (in animation playback)
- Light animation (color, fade, cone angle)
- Sun animation (e.g. for simulating sunrise and sunset)
- Time list control for precise graphical control of animations
- Genuine acceleration, braking, user defined complex functions
- Interpolations in time and space(immed., linear,B-spline,Akima,cubic)

Cinema4D runs on all Amigas with a minimum of 3MB RAM, and Kickstart 2 or higher. Cinema4D supports all Amiga and graphic card modes (HAM, HAM8, 24-bit,etc.) and recognized file formats (Imagine, Sculpt, DXF, Reflections, etc.). The package includes an extensive user manual with reference, tutorial & glossary sections, modeler, ray-tracer, convertor, scenes, objects,material library, textures, images, & online help.

Create your own reality with

Cinema 4D!!

See your local dealer or contact us for a full featured demonstration disk of the power of Cinema 4D



Disk MAGIC

Constantly doing battle with the Shell/CLI? Stop this futile struggle with DiskMAGIC, the easy-to-use file and disk management utility from Oregon Research. DiskMAGIC simplifies every task you perform, from the copying of disks and files, to the viewing of pictures and anims, to demystifying dreaded archiving utilities. In fact, you'll wonder how you ever used your Amiga without it.

All AmigaDOS commands are duplicated, and all are available with the simple click of a mouse button, or the press of a key. DiskMAGIC includes a user-definable file types facility,, includes a configurable launch utility, DiskDOCK, to make the running of Workbench/CLI programs, ARexx scripts, batch files , includes configurable viewers and players for a wide range of file formats including, hex files, ANSI/ASCII text files, IFF/ILBM pictures, IFF anims and HSN/IFF sound files.

- Eliminates the need to ever use the shell!
- Easy-to-use point-&-click user interface, graphical view of disks and drawers
- All AmigaDOS commands - copy, delete, rename, protect etc., ARexx scripts, programs are all available at the push of a button.
- Built-in viewers/players for sound, text, picture & animation files
- Infinitely configurable; change screenmode, filetypes, functions, drives, mouse functions, keyboard shortcuts, devices etc.
- Direct LHA support, copy in/out of archives.
- Freely definable file types, setup a file type for any file format.
- User-defined Drag and Drop facilities.
- DiskDOCK application launcher - ReallyCool!

Squirrel SCSI

Finally, a plug and play SCSI 2 solution for your A1200 and A600! Named for the famous storage hungry animal, the Squirrel SCSI interface simply plugs into your PCMCIA port. This instantly opens up a whole new world of possibilities! Attach up to 7 different devices including: Hard Disks,Tape Drives, Syquest Removable, Floptical, Iomega ZIP, EZ-Drive, and any SCSI CD-ROM drive including 3,4, and 6x drives.

Completely compatible with any SCSI 1 or SCSI 2 device, Squirrel SCSI achives a transfer rate >1.2Mb/sec on a stock A1200 and >3 Mb/sec on a 68030 accelerated A1200. Can be inserted or removed at any time and software automatically mounts/unmounts the drives! Drivers are all CD32 compatible so you can run your favorite CD32 titles!

Squirrel comes complete with SCSI software drivers and a host of utility programs including an audio CD player, a CD to HD sampler, and easy to use SCSI formatting and partitioning software.

Squirrel ZIP Tools

Full featured disk management software for Iomega ZIP drives! Zip disk formatting, read/write protect management, password protect, control software eject. Use with ANY SCSI Interface (does not require Squirrel SCSI). Available Now! Call for information on special Imoega Zip Drive and CD-ROM Bundles. Elegant and powerful Disk Cataloging and Hard Disk Backup and Restore software coming soon!

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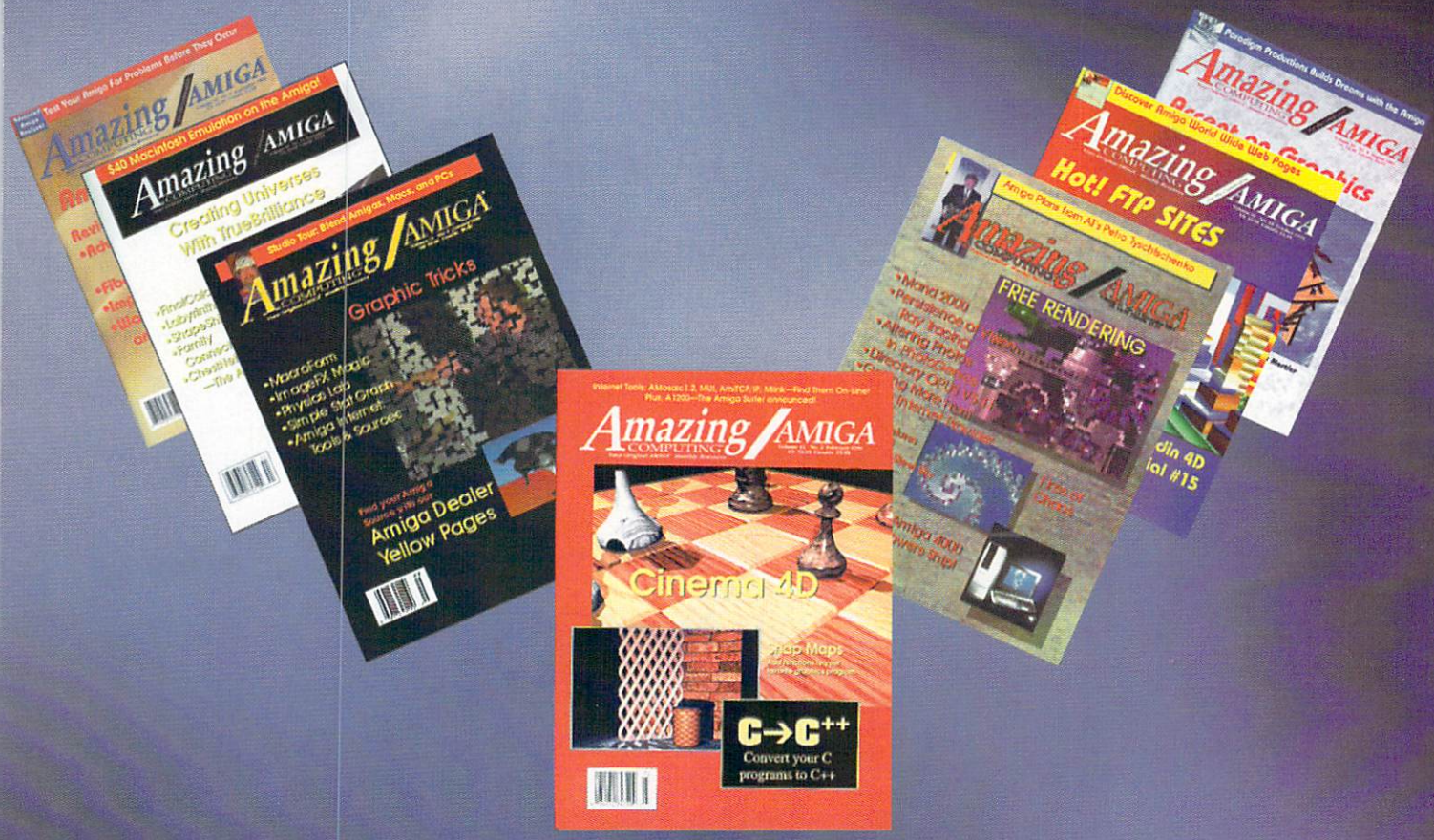

From the original demise of Commodore through the final sale to ESCOM to the creation of Amiga Technologies, AC has been there! During these difficult times, *Amazing Computing* has gone to great lengths to be the first with news and information for its readers. From interviews with the new owners to the thoughts and ideas of Amiga users, *Amazing Computing* has lead the way in complete Amiga coverage. AC's coverage is the first discussed on the networks, AC should be your first news format. Subscribe today!

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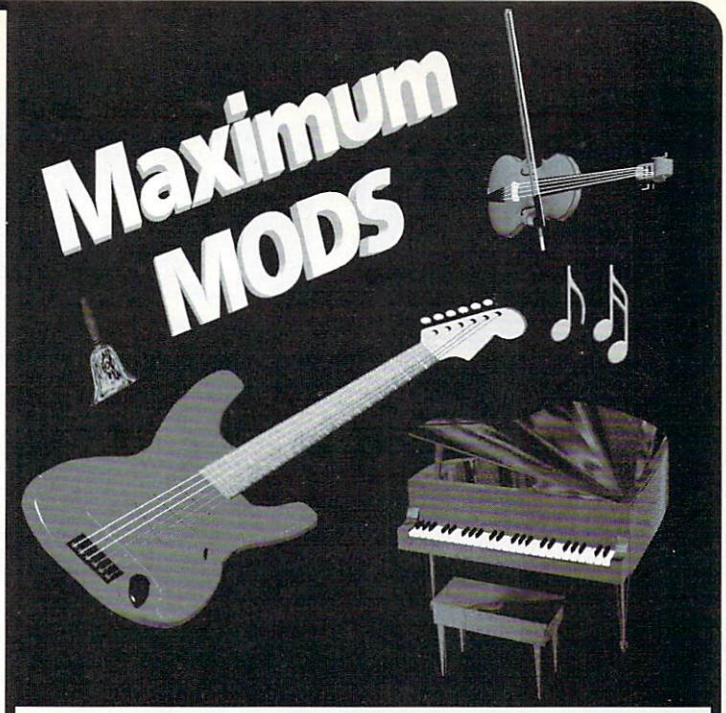

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Internet: legend@io.org

World Wide Web Home page:
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NEW PRODUCTS

and other neat stuff

TelevEyes/Plus from CeV Design, a new Amiga SX, a CDROM just for A1200/A4000 owners, a CD-ROM of commercial titles, all Kara Fonts on one CD ROM, plus a new Web site from MegageM.

CeV DESIGN

CeV Design has announced the release of their new TelevEyes/Plus program, and NTSC Encoder to SVHS or Composite Video. The TelevEyes/Plus converts any VGA type card to Video without any software needed. Features of the new TelevEyes/Plus include 15 pin VGA connectors-cables which are included, flicker-free composite and SVHS, simultaneous display to VGA monitor and TV monitor, and much more. The suggested retail price for the TelevEyes/Plus package is $279.00.

CeV Design has also announced the release of their new TelevEyes/Pro program, a Genlock Scan converter that has a multitude of features found on higher end genlocks. The genlock will automatically adapt to the timing of virtually any analog RGB display adapter's output and converts it to composite and S-Video outputs with NTSC timing. Some of the important features included in this converter are 15 pin VGA connectors-cables included, built-in underscan/overscan flicker filters for flicker-free composite and SVHS with onscreen programming like a VCR, simultaneous display to VGA monitor and TV monitor, and much more. The suggested retail price for this genlock converter is $699.00.

CeV Design, 11 Spring St., Reading, MA 01867, Tel 617-942-0209.

Personal Suite:
The Personal Suite CD-ROM includes commercial quality programs with no public domain or shareware software.

MODULAR DREAMS INC

Modular Dreams Incorporated has announced restarting sales and expansion of Amiga SX, finishing the next generation SX for IBM OS/2 Warp. SX was originally released in January 1995 and the first general release was scheduled for May 1995. Unfortunately, due to technical difficulties regarding Modular's AGA Amiga keyboard, they decided on a free copy policy for any orders received, a policy honored until the last copy of SX was released in November. All copies of SX 1.01 shipped include a free software-only upgrade to the next generation SX for Amiga, IBM OS/2 Warp, or AIX.

Modular Dreams Incorporated, P.O. Box 682, Vienna, VA 22183, email: MDF@BIX.com

THE AGA EXPERIENCE

According to its developers, SAdENESS and NFA present, The AGA Experience Amiga CDROM is the first CD dedicated to A1200/A4000 owners, and features the very best AGA-only software released over the past 3 years. Some of the main features are exclusive titles such as AGA Slideshows, Klondike cardsets and others, plus every AGA NFA release to date, including the brilliant 'Word' diskmag and 'Out of Space' Alien multimedia diskmags. Most of the contents run straight from the CD with over 300meg of ready-to-run utilities, diskmags, text files, demos, games and much more. Only those titles which NEED to be compressed have been, these include Demos and slideshows which have to be stored in DMS format. Extracting these is as simple as double-clicking an icon in Workbench.

The CD uses a MAGIC WORKBENCH color scheme and icons. Almost every program has a suitable MagicWB icon—some even have custom Ray-Traced icons. There are over 80 Klondike cardsets. There is also a ready-to-run version of the Klondike card game, with 10 built-in cardsets. The CD promises hundreds of programs never before seen on CD mostly downloaded from BBSs from

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for Windows/NT/Amiga

3 CD ROM SET $49.95

You have read about the resources available to artists through the Internet and BBS's, but you lack the time and finances to access them. LIGHT-ROM, published every 6 months, brings to you these resources along with exclusive contributions for an incredible value.

THE REVIEWS ARE IN

"The range of objects is very impressive. LIGHT-ROM is worth every penny."
Jason Holbourn • Amiga Format — January 1995

"A must have for Lightwave users."
Graeme Sandiford • Amiga Format — August 1995

"This CD is a must have for Lightwave users."
R. Shamms Mortier • Video Toaster User — August 1995

"This has got to be my favorite CD of all time."
Graeme Sandiford • Amiga Shopper — April 1995

"This CD ROM is an excellent value."
David Taylor • Amiga Shopper — August 1995

"The nicest collection I've seen for Lightwave models."
Erik Flom • Video Toaster User — October 1995

CD #1

★ Over 6,500 Lightwave objects divided into categories including Anatomy, Aviation, Botany, Buildings, Furniture, FX, Holidays, Household, Logos, Music, Ships, Space, Sports, Tools and Vehicles.

★ **LIGHT-ROM 1 had 2,300 Lightwave objects,**

★ **LIGHT-ROM 2 had 3,700 Lightwave objects &**

★ **LIGHT-ROM 3 has 6,500 Lightwave objects, an increase of 2,800 objects over LIGHT-ROM 2!**

CD #2

★ Collection of 3D objects in other formats including **Imagine** (175 megs), **3D Studio** (100 megs) and **Sculpt 3D** (30 megs).

★ 700 Textures in JPEG format complete with thumbnails.

★ Public Domain graphic programs and demos for the PC and Amiga.

★ Collection of 3D landscapes in Lightwave, 3D Studio and Imagine formats.

★ Video Toaster directory with wipes and CG fonts.

CD #3

★ Bonus "DEM ROM" includes over 1000 DEMs (digital elevation maps) for use with VistaPro, World Construction Set and Scenery Animator on any platform.

★ Use DEM ROM (along with any of these programs) to create realistic backgrounds or flights through your favorite scenery to incorporate into Lightwave or other 3D programs as background sequences.

★ All DEMs include thumbnail renderings of their topographical maps.

LIGHT-ROM 3 has over 1.5 gigabytes of new data compared to the previous issue.

Dealers, call 1-800-265-4041 for distribution information.

3 CD ROMs for only $49.95 plus shipping.
Shipping and handling is $4.95 for U.S. & Canada – $6.95 International.

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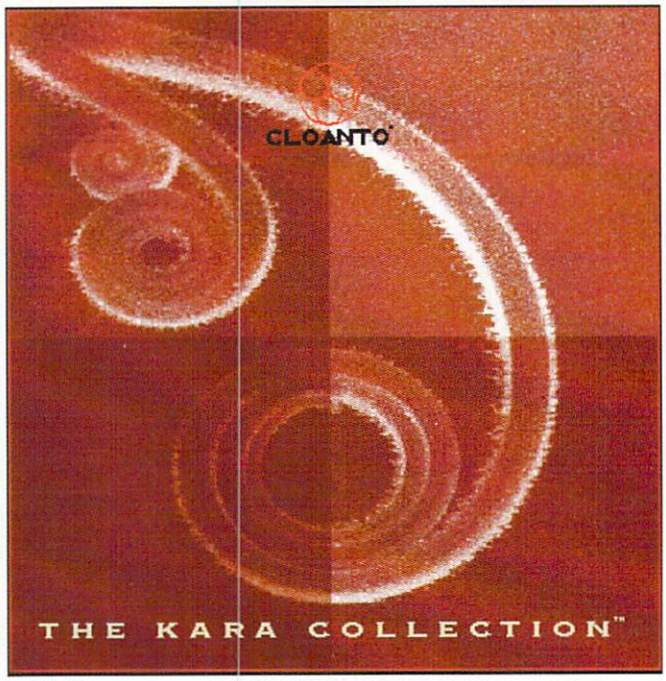

Kara Fonts: The complete collection of Kara Fonts is now available on one CD ROM!

around the World, and straight from the Internet. All AGA Amiga Doom clones, the latest AGA mega-demos, plus hundreds of demos, games, slideshows, utilities, diskmags, texts, fonts, 3D objects etc. round out this CD's features. $35.00 USA (cash only) includes postage and packing. *SAdENESS PD / NFA.,13 Russell Terrace, Mundesley, Norfolk NR11 8LJ ENGLAND. TEL / FAX: +44 (01263) 722169 E-Mail: SAdENESS@dcandy.demon.co.uk*

PERSONAL SUITE FROM CLOANTO

The Personal Suite CD-ROM includes Personal Paint and Personal Write from Cloanto, SBase 4 Personal (from Oxxi), Personal Fonts Maker 1 & 2 (Cloanto), 27 professional Kara color fonts (Kara Computer Graphics), Cloanto's DirDiff (file synchronization and replication software) and PNG Toolkit, plus 1/2 Gbyte of pictures, animations, stereograms, stereogram animations, Amiga fonts, printer downloadable fonts and texts.

The CD-ROM contains no public domain or shareware software. The commercial titles are the latest versions available, with full AmigaGuide manuals (English and German, with some titles also in Italian and French). Famous Amiga artists like Jim Sachs participated with a selection of their best Amiga art. Also included is a compilation of animations by Eric Schwartz, for the first time in IFF ANIM format. $99.95 MSRP *Distributed in the USA by Software Hut, Inc. Dealer inquiries are welcomed!*

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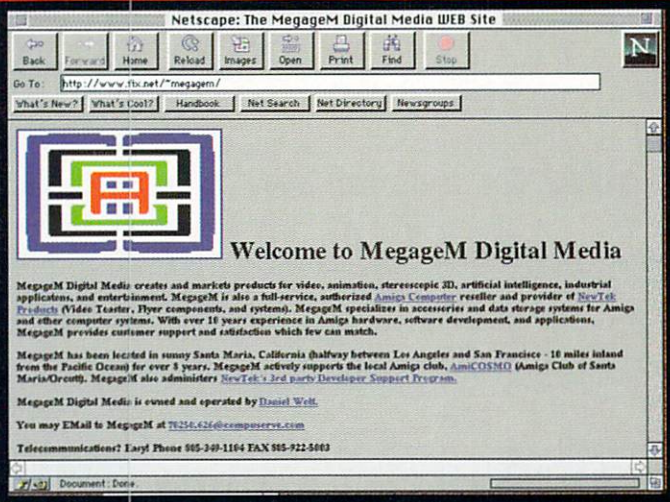
MegaGem's New Web Site!



Check out MegageM Digital Media's new Web site at http://www.fix.net/~megagem

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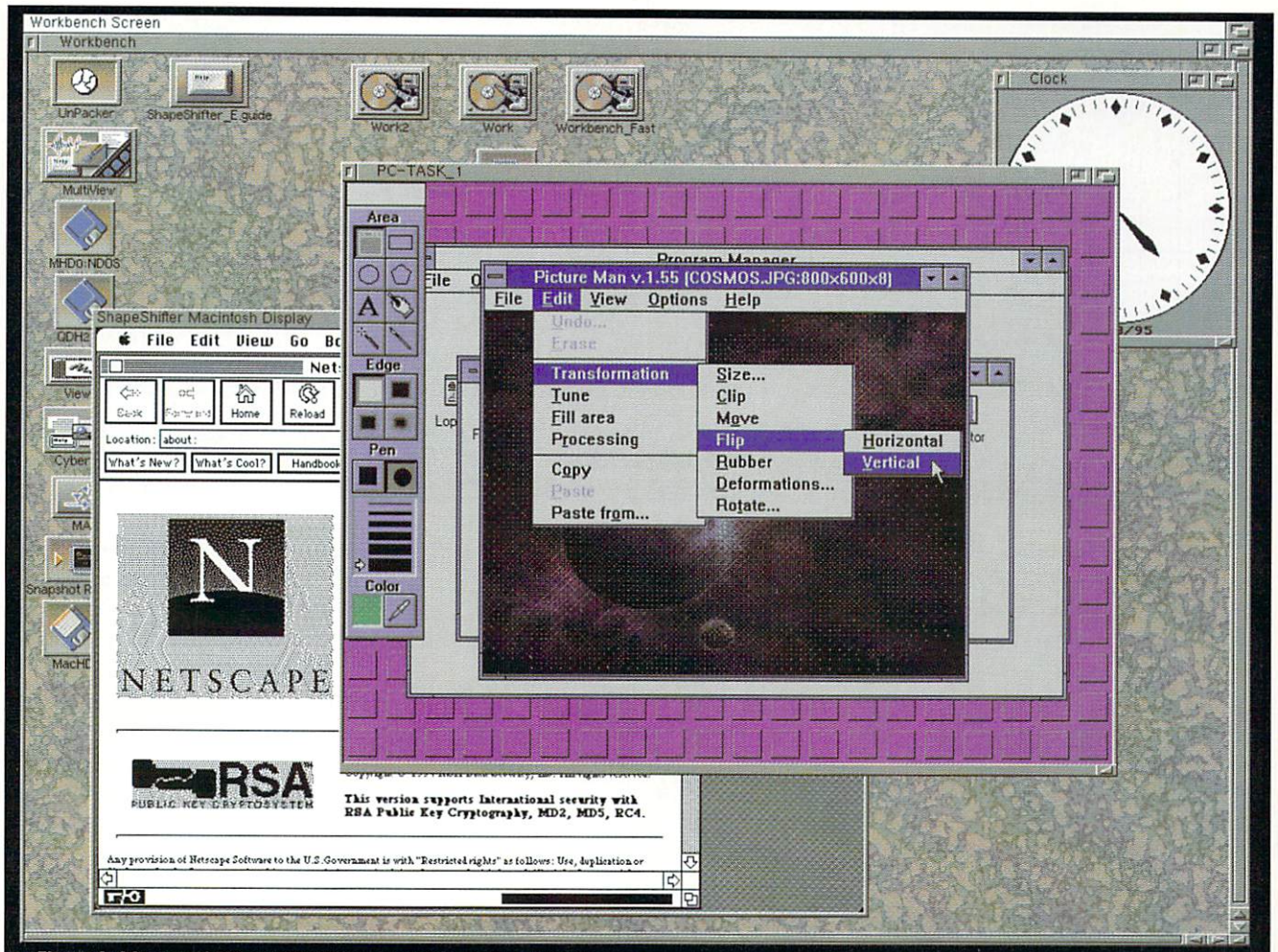


Figure 1: Mac and PC applications running on the Amiga.

PC Task

A software utility to run PC software on an Amiga?

by Marc Hoffman

Although many people in both the Amiga and even Mac communities don't like it, the dominant form of computing these days is the MS-DOS based machines powered by their line of Intel processors. The Amiga OS is still superior in numerous ways, but trying to sell this fact to the computing world can be difficult. But there are alternatives to dumping the Amiga and buying a new PC to run the Windows shell for DOS.

The Amiga is one of the most versatile computers on the market, even after it has taken a year off, and this is shown in its ability to emulate other computer platforms. See Figure 1, with both a Mac and PC running on the Amiga. There is a DOS emulator available for the Amiga, called PC-Task, and it promises to do as one might expect: it emulates the code of a real PC in order to run software written for that platform.

A Software PC

PC-Task is a software-only, Intel 80286 or 8086 emulator. Installation is easy and straightforward, utilizing the Commodore Installer program. PC-Task comes in four versions to be used on the appropriate Amiga: a 68000 to 68010 version, a 68020 to 68060 version, and a special "Turbo" version for both. The Turbo version is supposedly faster than the normal version, but it does have some drawbacks.

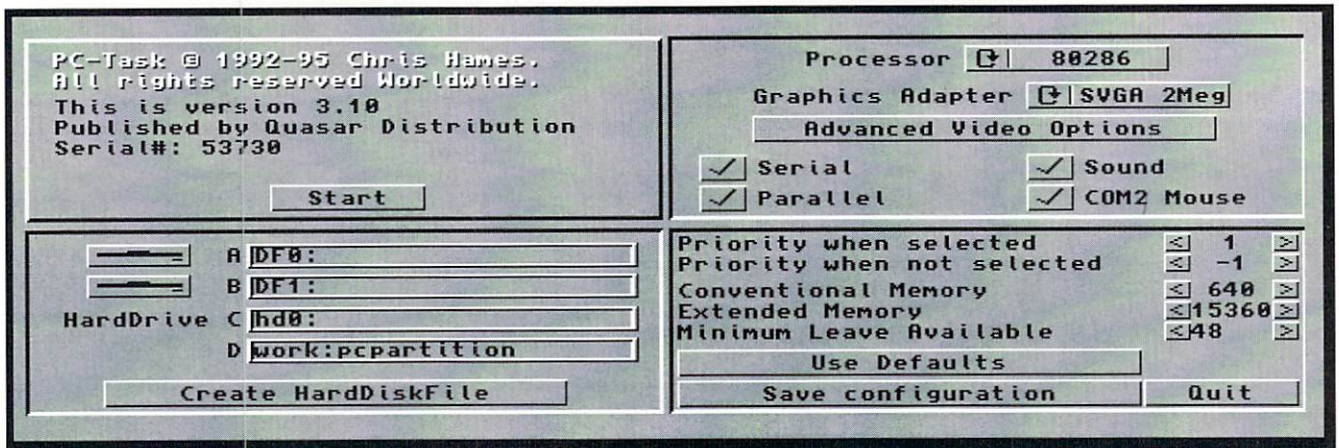


Figure 2: The main screen of PC-Task contains HardDrive and Floppy drive specification, selection of either an 8086 or 80286 processor, Graphics Adaptor, Advanced Video Options, Serial and Parallel options, Sound, the COM2 Mouse driver, and more.

First, PC-Task Turbo is very memory intensive. PC-Task Turbo allocates about four times as much memory as the normal version of PC-Task. For example, on my 26MB A4000, I was only able to squeeze out about 4.6MB of usable RAM in the Turbo emulation. This is opposed to about 17MB of usable RAM in the normal version of PC-Task. The other drawback is, ironically, speed. While the basic processing power is increased, the hard drive access is slowed down.

When PC-Task first fires up, the main screen is displayed with the following information (see Figure 2): HardDrive and Floppy drive specification, selection of either an 8086 or 80286 processor, Graphics Adaptor, Advanced Video Options, Serial and Parallel options, Sound, and the COM2 Mouse driver. Last is multi-tasking priority, memory selection, and configuration settings.

Starting with the drive section, PC-Task allows the user to specify the MS-DOS drives A and B as any Amiga floppy device; DF0: and DF1:, for example. In addition, people using utilities such as CrossDOS can directly mount those devices for use in PC-Task(PC0: could be assigned to drive A).

In terms of hard drive specification, PC-Task uses two different formats. The first is a HardDiskFile, which is a file on an AmigaDOS volume that acts like a real hard drive or hard drive partition. This option provides flexibility in terms of the creation of new volumes, making the need to re-partition the AmigaDOS volume unnecessary. Simply tell PC-Task where the file is to be placed, tell it how large the file is to be, and the result is an instant hard drive.

Simply tell PC-Task where the file is to be placed, tell it how large the file is to be, and the result is an instant harddrive.

Of course the biggest drawback to this type of system is the speed factor. Just trying to boot up Windows 3.1 can take several times longer than booting off of a real hard drive. Which brings up the next type of hard drive device—a dedicated partition on the hard drive. A dedicated partition is much faster on the order of several times. Windows 3.1 takes considerably less time to boot off of the hard drive partition.

PC Graphics

Graphics on the PC are quite complicated. This is due in part to the large number of standards and even greater number of video drivers available. PC-Task emulates many different PC graphics adapters: MDA, CGA, EGA, VGA, and SVGA 512K/SVGA 1mb/SVGA 2mb.

MDA is the most basic of the adapters, allowing only monochrome output. CGA is the next step up from MDA, and according to the PC-Task manual, has the best implementation in the emulation of any of the adapters. EGA is a step above CGA and it encompasses the first two modes, plus it adds some enhanced modes of its own.

VGA can handle everything that the first three adapters can display, plus it adds higher resolution and color definition. Some displays under VGA require 256 colors. For these screen modes, the Amiga will have to either have the AGA chip set or a graphics board with the ability to display 256 colors. SVGA, or Super VGA, simply adds even more resolution and color capability to the computer; the higher the RAM value attached to the adapter, the higher the resolution and color definition.

One of the main applications that will throw PC-Task's graphics emulation off is games. Sometimes programmers of games tend to be quite liberal in their interpretation of these modes, and they take certain liberties that do not follow the standards. This will most likely confuse PC-Task, and the graphics cannot be displayed.

The way PC-Task actually uses the Amiga to display these different

modes falls under the Advanced Video Options, and can be confusing at first. The first thing is to tell PC-Task which adapter to emulate. For example, if the Graphics Adaptor is set to MDA, then no matter which program is run, the best possible display will be monochrome.

Once this is set up, PC-Task has to know which Amiga screen mode (or graphics board mode) will be assigned to each of the PC equivalents. Figure 3 shows the screen that allows assignment of these modes. Notice that the mode shown is PCMode 3, which happens to be 640x200x16 colors. The Amiga must know what kind of screen to open this on, and as shown, the mode being assigned is DBNTSC:High Res, 640x200. Now, whenever a PC program tries to open a 640x200x16 color screen, PC-Task will force the Amiga to open up the DBNTSC:High Res screen instead.

All of the different modes in PC-Task can be custom assigned in this way, and there are 23 of them ranging from 40x25x2 colors to 1280x1024x256 colors. In addition, PC-Task can force the emulation to open inside a window on the Amiga Workbench.

In the interest of speed of the graphics updates, PC-Task allows the user to set updates to one of five settings: 1, 2, 4, or 8 frames (a frame is 1/30 second); or, an Immediate setting can be set to force the updates whenever a change to the screen occurs. When using the MDA palette, the MDA Palette gadget allows the user to set the colors used with this mode via RGB sliders.

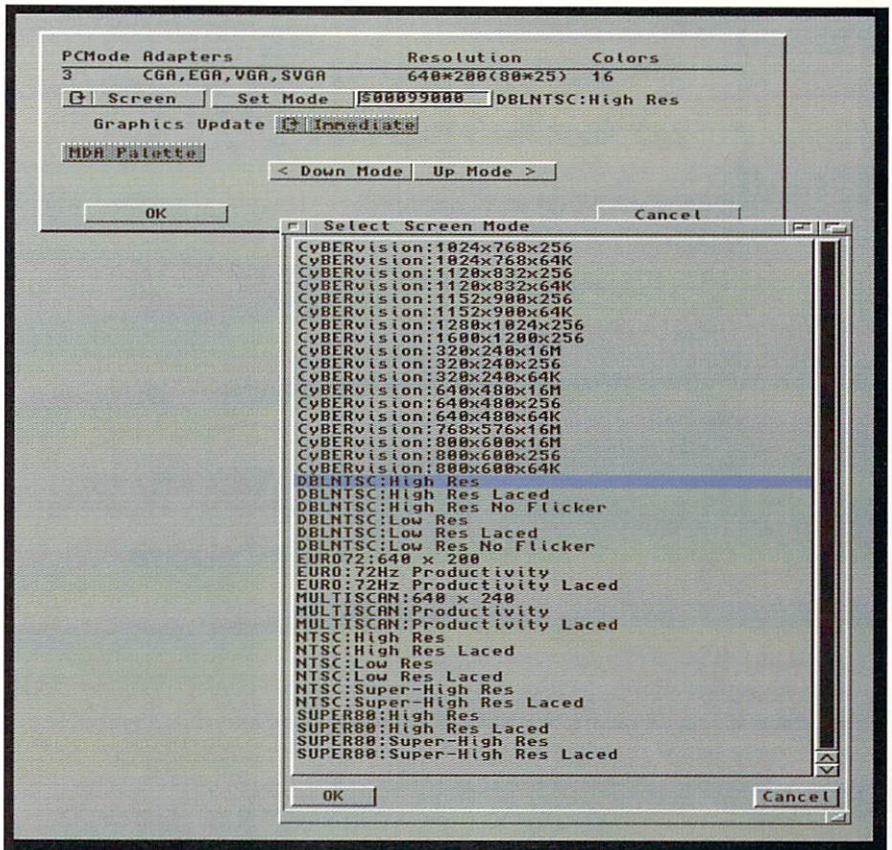


Figure 3: This screen is used to select the PC graphics mode you require. PCMode 3 (shown) is 640x200x16 colors.

PC Ports, Sound, Mouse and more

PC-Task can be made to use the Amiga's serial and parallel ports to emulate modem and printing operations on the PC. The parallel option worked perfectly on my Hewlett Packard PaintJet printer. When using the serial port, I did run into some problems in the area of telecommunications.

For sound support, PC-Task is somewhat limited. Most PCs have basic sound generation circuitry built onto the motherboard. Simple beeps and sounds are possible with this strategy. PC-Task's sound support is limited to this level. As stated in the manual, PC-Task does not support emulation of any kind of sound card such as the SoundBlaster.

As for mouse support, PC-Task comes through. When the COM2 Mouse option is turned on, PC-Task will emulate a MicroSoft compatible mouse. Emulation of this kind increases the likelihood of compatibility with programs that may use custom mouse drivers.

The Priority When Selected and Priority When Not Selected deal with the multitasking priority given to the emulation when its screen is selected and when other programs are selected. The setting of 1 in the Selected box means that when the emulation's screen is selected, then the bulk of the processor's power is allocated to PC-Task. The -1 setting in the Not Selected box means that when PC-Task's screen is sent to the back, other programs will get most of the processor's time. PC-Task multitasks very well. As I am writing this review, PC-Task is decompressing software to the same physical hard drive that I am periodically saving this review to, and there are no problems. In addition, many different PC-Tasks can be opened at once on the same Amiga.

PC-Task can be made to use the Amiga's serial and parallel ports to emulate modem and printing operations on the PC.

(continued on page 26)

ScapeMaker 4.0

Combine the power of Digital Elevation Models from Vista Pro with the abilities of other programs to create your own 3D virtual worlds.

By R. Shamms Mortier

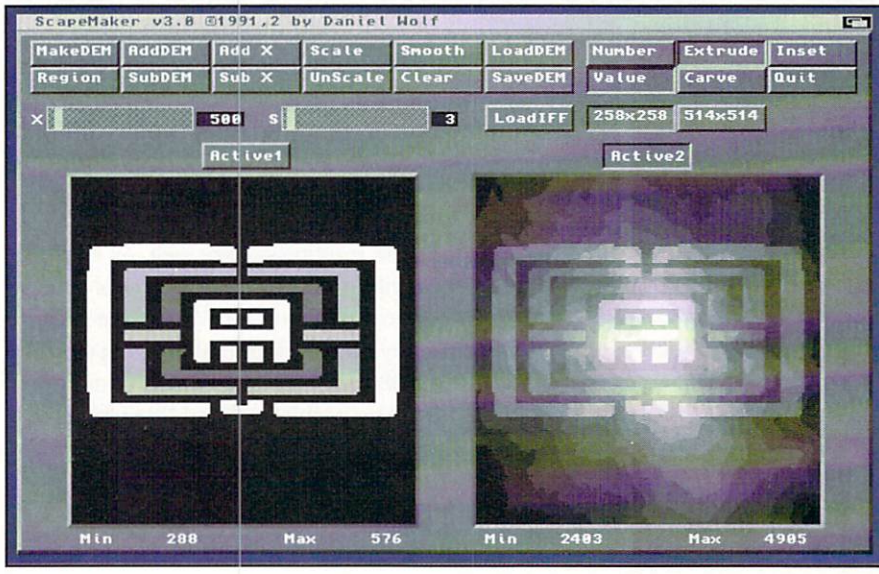
Daniel Wolf of MegageM has been with the Amiga almost since its inception. He has given his best efforts to the continuation of one of the few pieces of software capable of translating the mysterious world of fractal math into startling graphics and animations. He has also continued a steady and dependable upgrade policy for all of his software, even through the dark times just passed—the transition from Commodore to ESCOM.

As we shall discover, ScapeMaker (as well as other MegageM products we will review in future *Amazing* issues) has many uses for the Amiga 3D artist and animator. It should also be realized that most of MegageM's wares have been consciously connected to Vista Pro, especially when it comes to any interaction with DEMs (Digital Elevation Models).

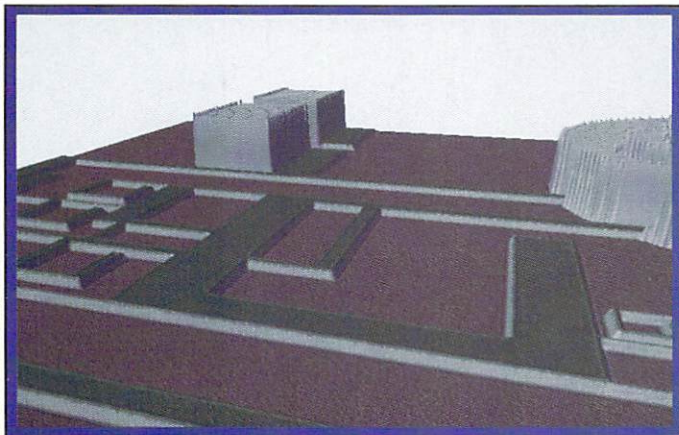
DEMs are the U.S. Geographical Survey's way of detailing the 3D information collected by various means that describe terrain shapes. There are DEMs for every foot of the Earth's surface, and another set for undersea terrain and even planetary geography (Mars and Venus especially).

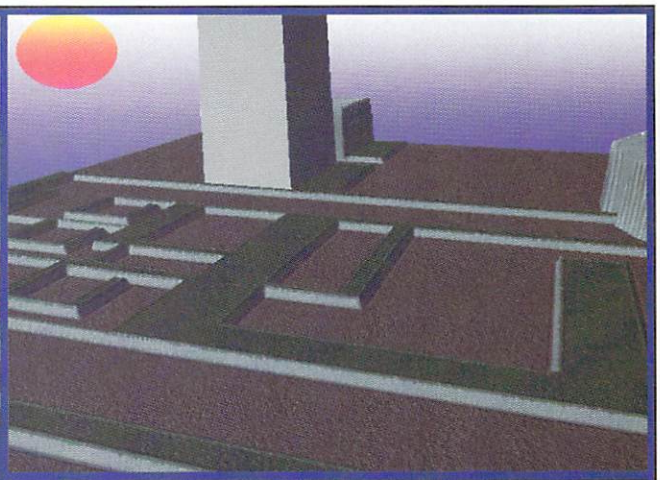
The reason that MegageM products are so interwoven with Vista Pro is that Vista Pro has its own prioritized way of addressing DEMs. Other software can read the Vista Pro DEMs (Natural Graphics Scenery Animator, Axiom's Pixel Pro, and others), but MegageM products actually write Vista Pro DEMs. This establishes a veritable family relationship between the products.

ADSPEC's Aladdin 4D can load in a DEM created by Scenery Animator, but not Vista Pro DEMs. Neither LightWave nor Cinema 4D loads DEMs at all. No other Amiga 3D software that I am aware of loads in Vista Pro DEMs. This is a problem, because it is in the major 3D packages that high quality bump maps and textures can be applied to a DEM to make it something really special, though the DEM packages (Vista Pro, Scenery Animator and others) do give DEMs a believable level of realism.

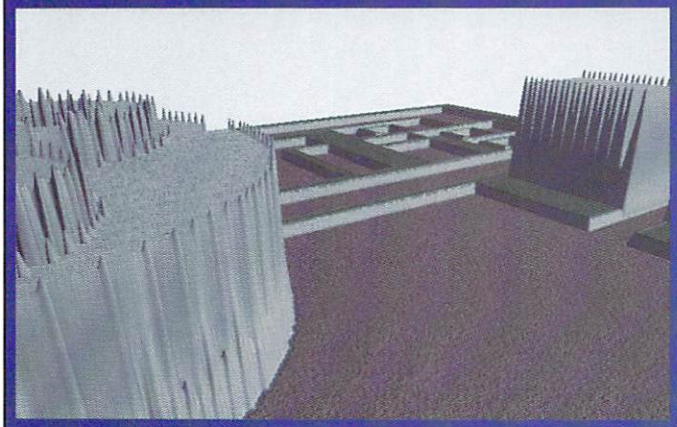


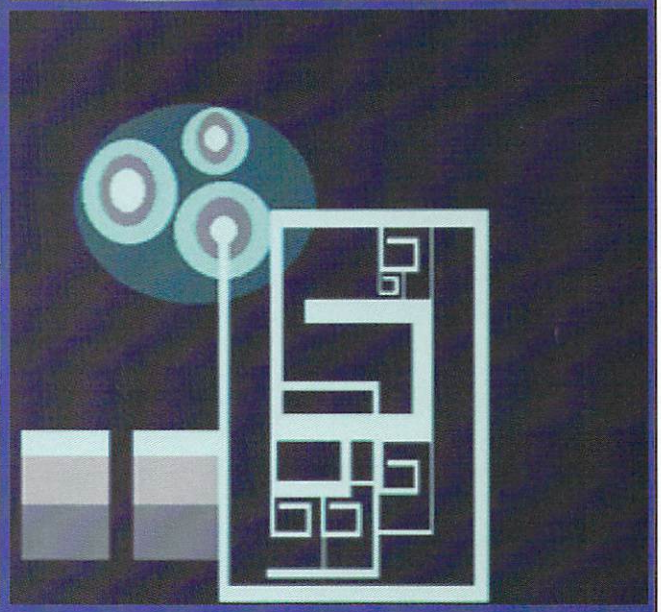
ScapeMaker Interface
The ScapeMaker interface allows you easy access to all of the tools and options. As you can see, two very different IFFs can be loaded into ScapeMaker at the same time, and can be combined or operated on by the Boolean selections.



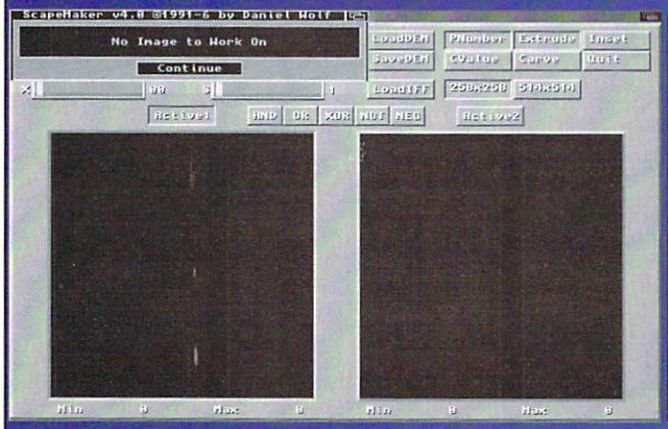


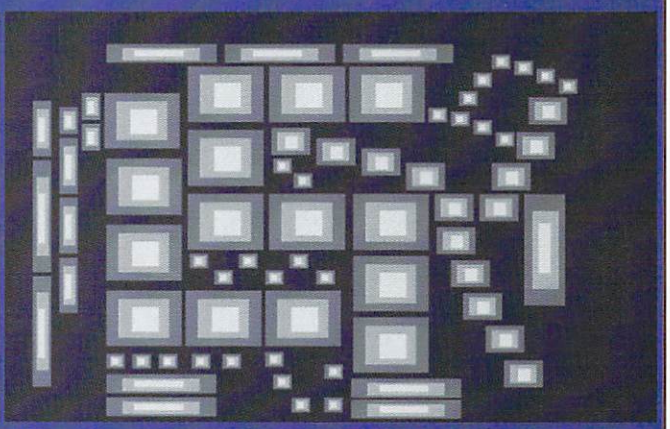
Generating Scenes from DPaint 2D graphics with Scenery Animator





This Scenery Animator generated rendering (above top left) of a ScapeMaker file shows how a simple 2D graphic translates into a 3D world. With just a little tweaking in Brilliance, our new 3D landscape begins to look more pleasing (above top right). The same scene (above bottom left) as before, but turned around so we can appreciate it from another angle. The DPaint 2D graphic topview (above bottom left) of the above scenes looks simple compared to the 3D world produced from it in ScapeMaker.





An error flag in ScapeMaker tells you immediately when the software refuses to recognize an image that was attempted for import. This is what happened when Brilliance was used as the IFF generating software instead of DPaint (above left). This is what a typical IFF (above right) might look like when created in a paint program. Saving it out and importing it into ScapeMaker is the next step in creating a Vista Pro DEM file or a LightWave object.

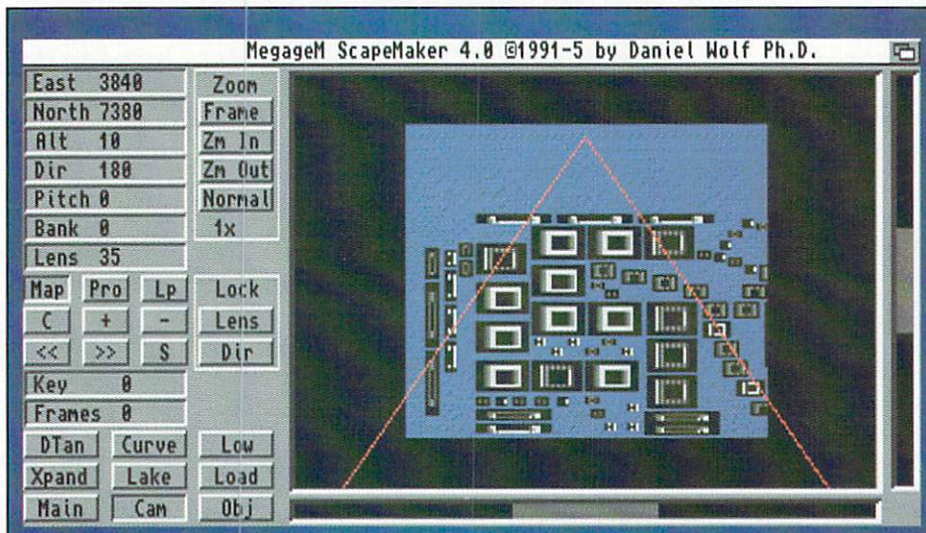
You can readily see that ScapeMaker and Vista Pro are meant for each other in these Vista Pro

This latest version of ScapeMaker can save a Vista Pro DEM out as a LightWave Object file (.LWO). Daniel Wolf told me that his Fractal Pro software also saves out Fractal elevation maps as LightWave objects (we will explore that also in a future issue). LightWave object files, by the way, work equally as well on the Amiga as they do on the Windows LightWave environment, so the Amiga owners, that use an Alpha system to render LightWave files, will benefit just as much as solitary Amiga owners.

The purpose of this article and the attached graphics is to give you an overview and visual examples of the power and versatility of ScapeMaker 4.0 and the awesome beauty of rendered DEM files. We will take a step-by-step approach as well, guiding you through several ScapeMaker possibilities.

ScapeMaker 4.0: an overview of the tools and options

Basically, ScapeMaker's first priority is to take in IFF graphics and to translate that data into 3D information that a 3D modeling program can use to generate alternate 3D views. As such, we have to start by having familiarity with a 2D paint program in order to produce the graphics in their 2D form, before ScapeMaker can do its work.



Them DEMs
A DEM file saved out from ScapeMaker and imported into Scenery Animator for rendering can be seen as a topological graphic in the Map view.

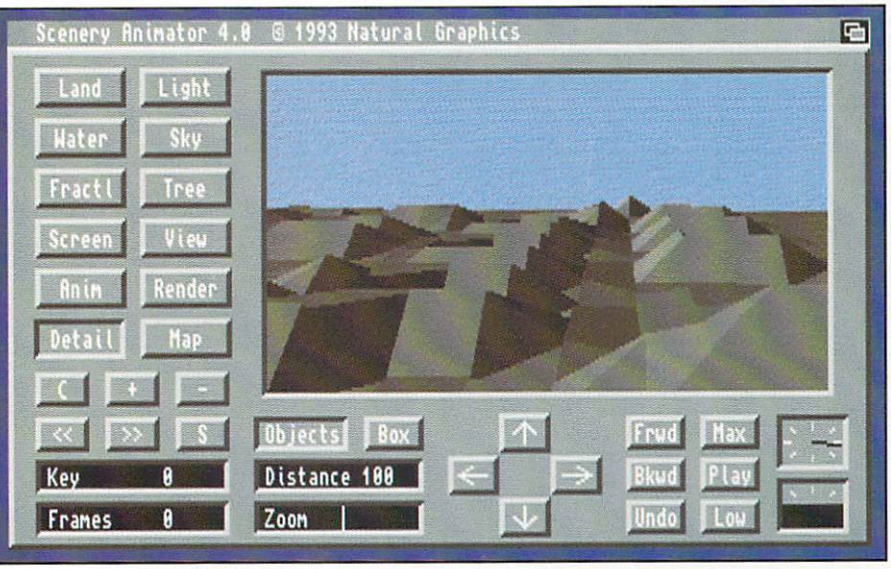
renderings of ScapeMaker DEMs.

In my experiments, I found that ScapeMaker liked my Electronic Arts DPaint IFFs more than it appreciated those saved out in Play Incorporated's Brilliance or TrueBrilliance. I talked to Mr. Wolf about this, and we have not been able to, as yet, discover what the difference is based upon. I just know that Brilliance graphics crashed my system too many times. It may be because Brilliance Graphics write some unique header information to the file that ScapeMaker can't digest. When I find the definitive answer, I will relay it to you.

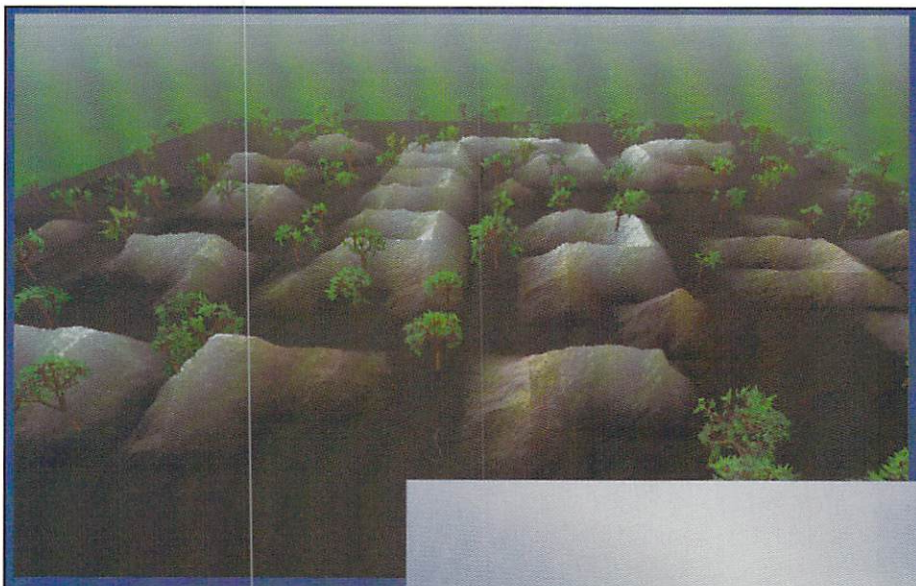
Meanwhile, ScapeMaker has its own method of handling data. ScapeMaker reads in the luminance values (light/dark) as elevation data, with white being the "highest" and black the "darkest".

ScapeMaker has its own demands as far as file size and bitplane depth as well. It will not read 24-bit, IFF64, HAM and other nonstandard types of pictures. It rejects super bitmaps larger than 768 x 592, and will not accept graphics with more than 6 bitplanes.

ScapeMaker will accept 256 color/grayscale images (Lo-Res 320 x 200 to 384 x 592 and Hi-Res 640 x 200 to 768 x 592). It tries to treat anything from 320 x 200 to 384 x 296 as a Lo-Res picture, and 320 x 400 to 384 x 592 as a Lo-Res Interlace. 640 x 200 to 768 x 296 are defined as Hi-Res pictures, and 640 x

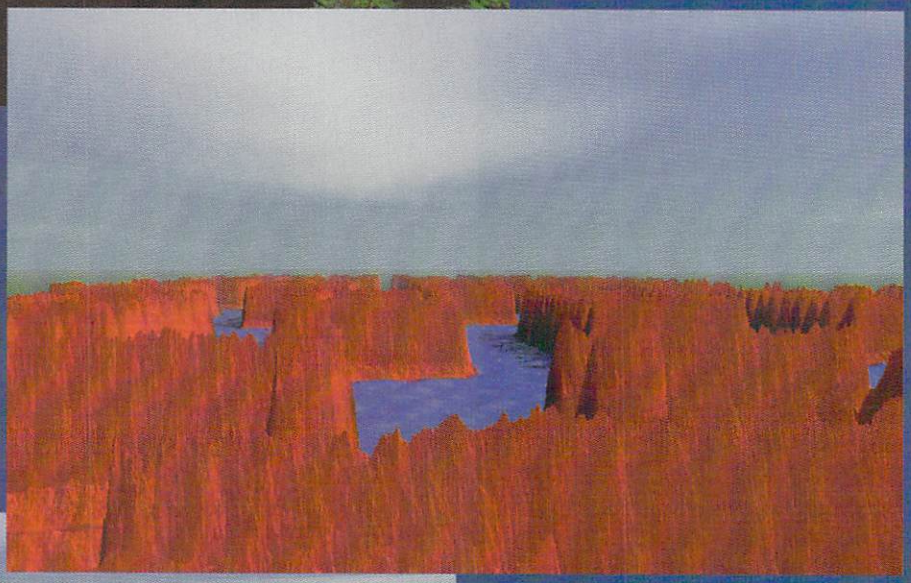


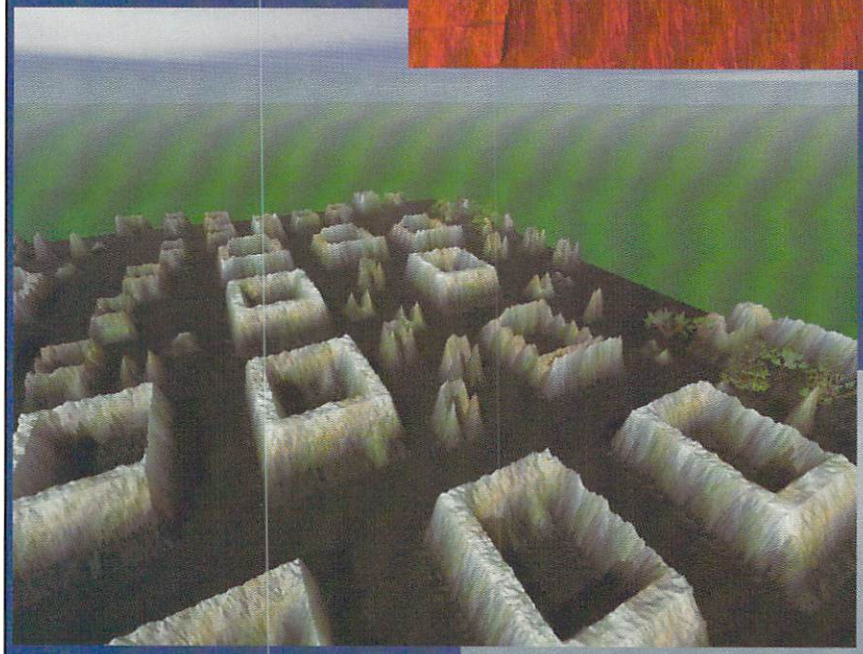
Before rendering in Scenery Animator, the DEM file can be rotated and resized until the desired features are in the viewplane.

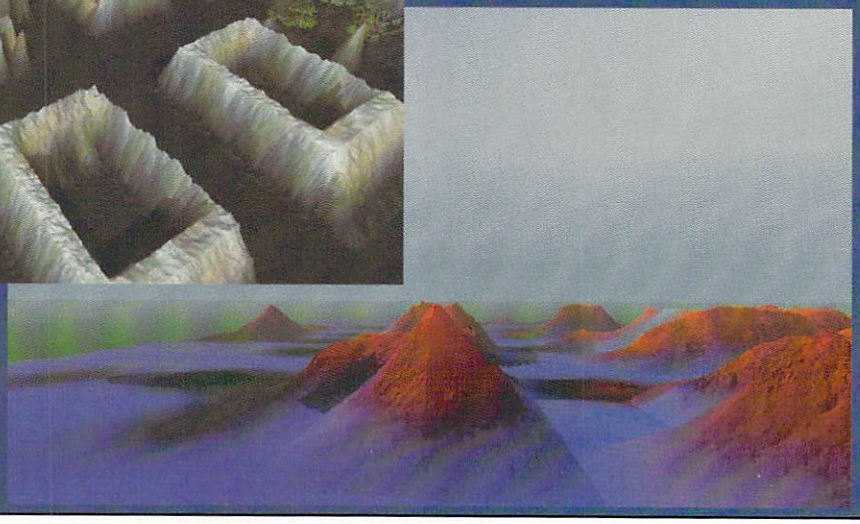


By altering the rendering settings in Vista Pro, the same DEM can take on radically different personalities.

Alternate Realities







400 to 768 x 592 are interpreted as Hi-Res Interlace. If a picture has 6 bitplanes, it is treated as a HAM graphic.

Regions

ScapeMaker does not / cannot save out the whole of a screen as a DEM file, but instead addresses either a maximum area of 258 x 258 pixels or 514 x 514. This is accomplished by selecting the "Region" button after loading an IFF to one of the two active areas on the interface.

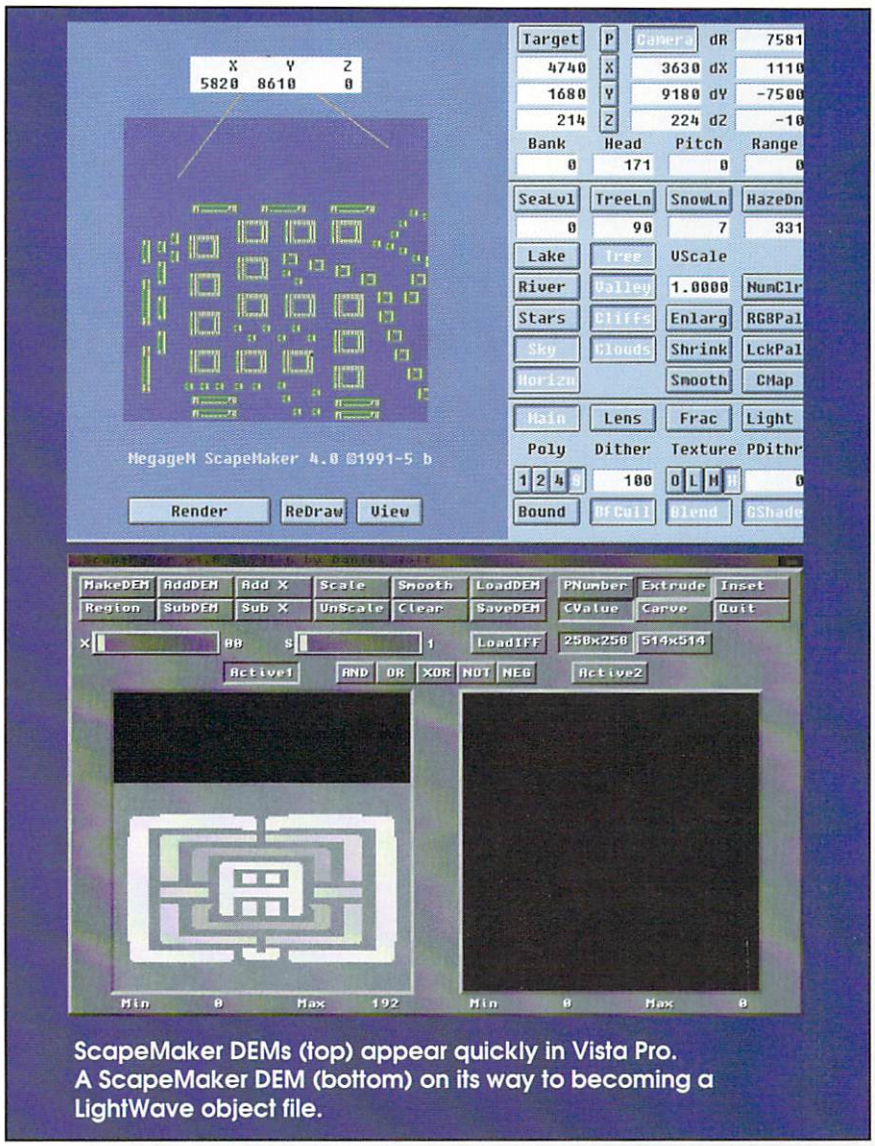
Upon selecting Region, you are shunted to the graphics screen where a resizable window sits above the graphic. Resizing it and moving it over the selected area desired, and then closing it down, brings that selected region into ScapeMaker. To see the top view of the soon-to-be DEM, the button "MakeDEM" is pressed. Saved DEMs are always in the Vista Pro format, except,..

LightWave Object files

To save a DEM to the LWO format, the ScapeMaker process requires a bit more preparation. There are five special files that have to be placed in RAM first (I wish that the program did this with an interface button, or better yet, a simple selection in the save requester that gave a LWO choice).

Every DEM saved out of ScapeMaker is in the Vista Pro format, except when the software spots one or more of these special files in RAM. At that point, the file is translated to the LWO format as a 3D LightWave object.

Of the five files, four are used to save the DEM region out as a quadrant (grid of 1 meter squares), while the fifth file translates the DEM to a Lo-Res object covering the whole region. Only the 258 x 258 region can be used when saving out a LightWave Object. The DEM30.LWO holds to a true 30 meter grid in LightWave (Lo-Res), giving you realistic landscape distances and covering the whole DEM region as the objects area.



ScapeMaker DEMs (top) appear quickly in Vista Pro. A ScapeMaker DEM (bottom) on its way to becoming a LightWave object file.

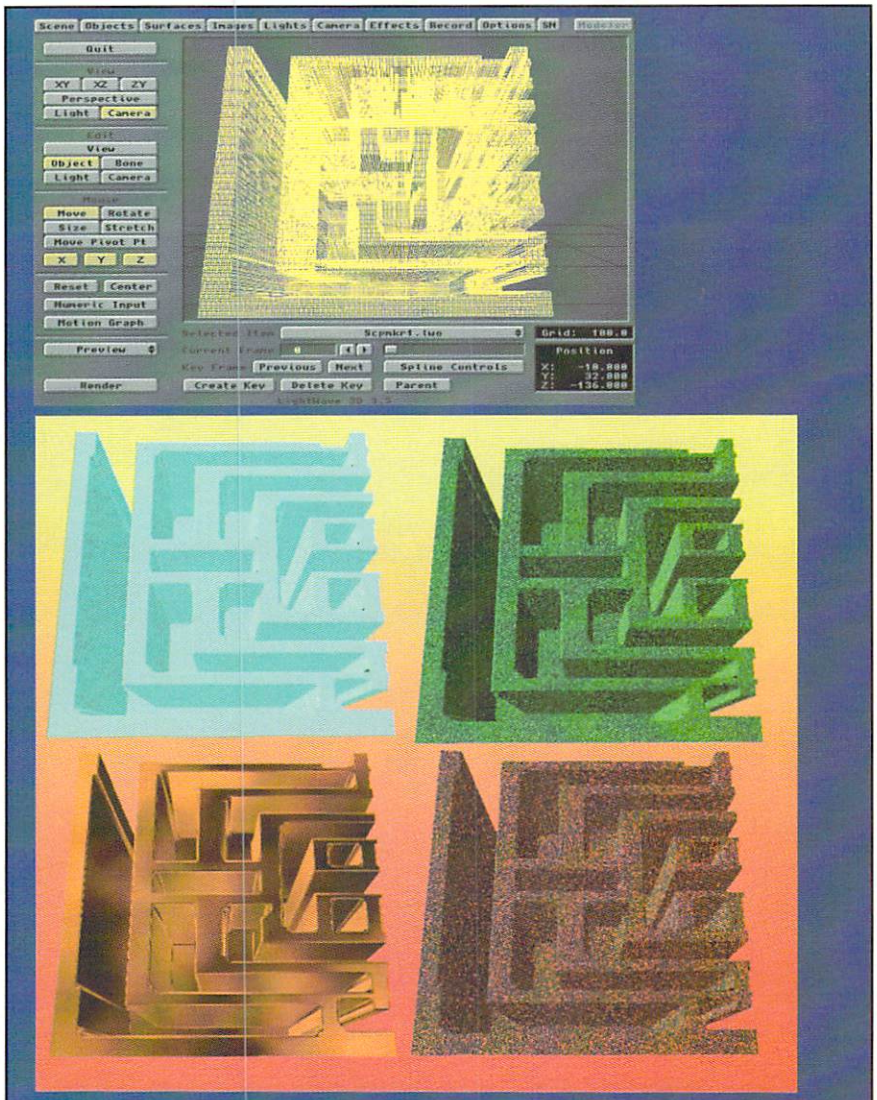
All of the ScapeMaker LightWave objects come in at 16,000 to 17,000 points and polygons. The difference between the DEM30 LWO and the other four quadrangle files is their resolution. Using any number up to all of the four gives you a maximum Hi-Res 258 x 258 pixel region separated into four discreet chunks. These four have to be loaded into LightWave separately, and each overlaps perfectly as it comes in, giving you a seamless Hi-Res DEM object that is LightWave compatible. Vista Pro's Z values come "out" of the screen and LightWave's Z values go "into" the screen, so it's best to use the Negative button first in ScapeMaker so the object reads in LightWave as expected.

Booleans and Beyond

ScapeMaker 4.0 has a whole set of Boolean algorithms that allow you to load in two separate IFFs, transform them to DEMs, and then to combine them in various ways with one another. They are AND, OR, XOR, NOT and NEG. Very convoluted 3D shapes can be created in this manner.

There are also a number of other ways to operate on ScapeMaker DEM files. If you would rather make caves than mountains, than use the ScapeMaker "Carve" mode instead of "Extrude". All of the higher (whiter) values will read as "deeper" extrusions by doing this.

ScapeMaker translates visual data into DEM elevation data in one of two selectable ways: in Value Mode, the



Top: LightWave imports the new DEM perfectly. Bottom: Once a ScapeMaker DEM is translated to a LightWave object, you can use LightWave's excellent surface maps to texturize it to your heart's desire.

brightness data is read in and interpreted as elevation data, in Number Mode the number of the color in a palette is translated to a DEM elevation sequentially (4 color pictures will have only four possible elevations). You can add/subtract X values from the picture by using an on-screen slider, and another slider allows you to change the variable depth/height of the DEM by multiples of 1 to 99.

A special Inset Mode allows you to inset a small version of one DEM in the corner of another (like "picture in picture on a TV). DEMs in the two active screens can be added to or subtracted from one another.

The Web

MegageM operates a great Web site for those of you with access to the Internet. It includes all sorts of sample files and references to all of the MegageM software line. Its address is: http://www.fix.net/ ~megagem/.

Painting a DEM for ScapeMaker

Again, I had better luck with DPaint than with Brilliance doing this. If you want a sharp edge to the 3D object, like a 90 degree sheer cliff, than make sure there is maximum difference between the luminance of the object and that of the background upon which it sits. For instance, use a white of 255, 255, 255 (RGB) for the drawing or foreground 2D object and a black of 0, 0, 0 (RGB) for the background plane. The resulting DEM produced by ScapeMaker will have a sharp edge, a sheer drop in the elevation model.

On the other hand, if you desire a smoother curved drop-off and a more rounded appearance, use descending levels of grays around the object. You can also select the "smooth" function in ScapeMaker which essentially does the same thing. If you prefer carved out objects, just make sure that the background is lighter than the image painted on it.

The LightWave/DEM Process

This is the only point at which I ran into problems with ScapeMaker. It was not the software, but the way this process is documented, meaning not clearly. Because ScapeMaker is such a great package, I will forgive the frustrating two hours I spent experimenting until I figured it out. Here, then, is the way to go about this adventure.

1. Place one or more of the five LWO files in the "LightWave Objects" drawer in ScapeMaker in RAM.
2. In ScapeMaker, import an IFF and translate it into a DEM, or import a DEM that's already translated.
3. Save the DEM as you normally would to your hard drive. It is now an LWO file, and not a Vista Pro DEM.
4. Open up LightWave and import it from the hard disk.

There are a few other cautions and warnings, but the documentation covers them clearly. Overall, the only comment I can make on this software is "great job, Dr. Wolf"!

ScapeMaker 4.0
MSLP: $49.95
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DKB Announces WildFire 060 Accelerator for the A2000 & RapidFire SCSI-2 Controller

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WildFire 060 50Mz Accelerator for the A2000

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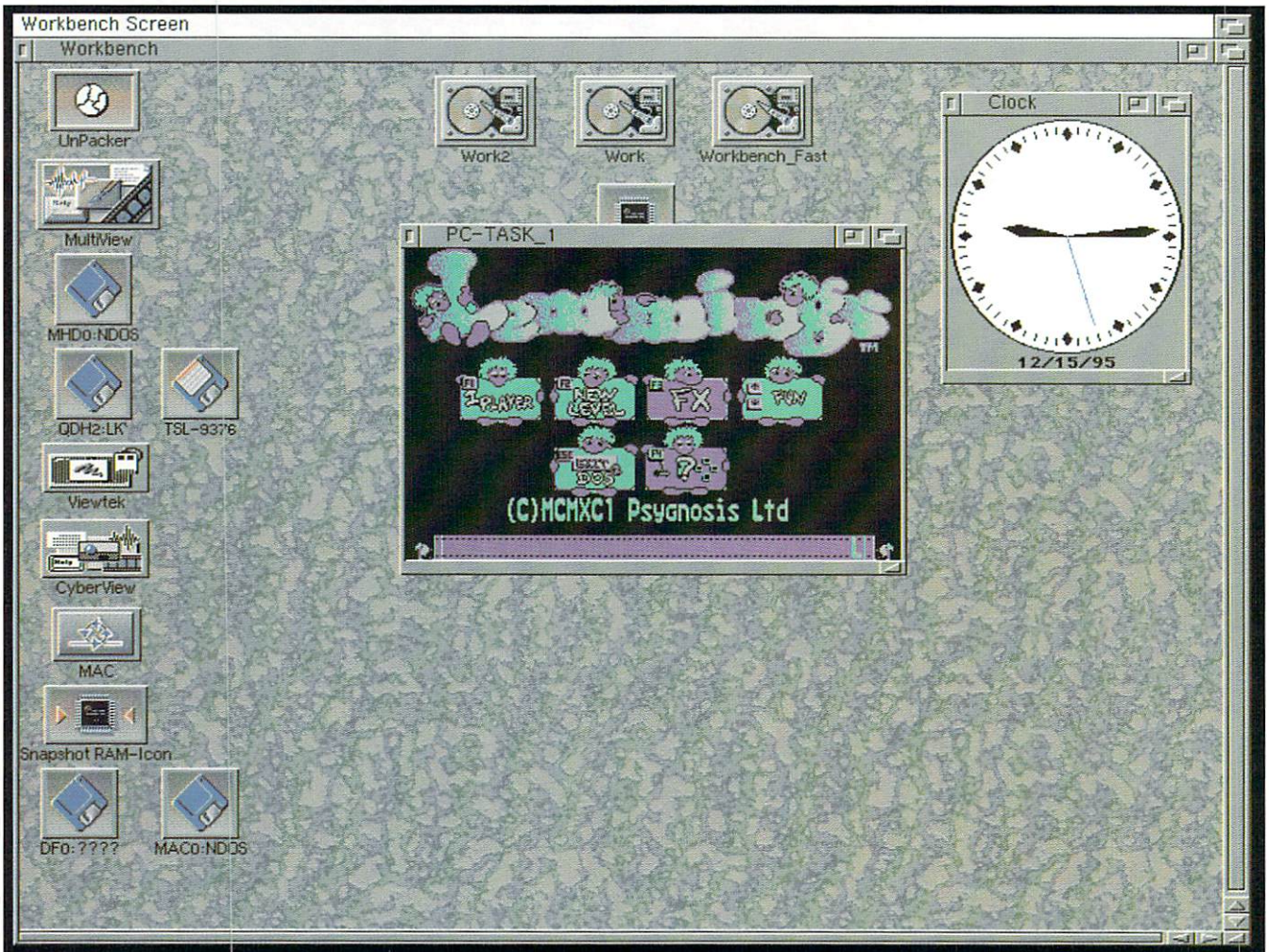

Figure 4: A CGA PC version of Lemmings displayed on the Amiga.

(continued from page 15)

Memory on the PC is even more confusing than its graphics adaptors. PC-Task handles the two main types of PC memory by allowing the user to set both the Conventional Memory and the Extended Memory amounts in kilobytes. The conventional memory is typically set to 640k, while the extended memory is set to however much RAM can be squeezed out of the Amiga that PC-Task is running on; the maximum amount of RAM that PC-Task can address is 16mb.

Be warned: PC-Task could have the amount of extended memory shown in Figure 2 (15.36mb), and if there is not enough memory in the conventional memory, some programs will not run. They will not even recognize the extended memory. This is not an artifact of PC-Task, but is a glaring limitation of MS-DOS. In order for such programs to recognize the extended memory, a special program called a memory manager must be used.

The PC-Task manual lists HIMEM.SYS and EMS40.SYS as possible solutions. The MicroSoft MemMaker memory manager program will not work because it requires at least an 80386. The 640k in PC-Task can be increased to 704k if MDA or CGA graphics adapters are used. Any setting above these two adapters allows up to 640k.

The last memory option deals with how much minimum Amiga memory will be left free while the emulation is running. This is to ensure that the Amiga remains stable. If this amount becomes too low (16k to 64k), then the Amiga may crash. This setting is to ensure that the Amiga always has enough RAM to continue functioning.

Is it a real PC?

The question is how well does the emulator function? The results I obtained were mixed. I tested several different PC software packages, both commercial and public domain. One problem in my testing was that many programs on the market today require at least an 80386, which is beyond PC-Task's ability at its present stage of development.

Among the commercial programs tested were Windows 3.1, which seemed to function as well as can be expected from Windows. Windows '95 cannot be run from PC-Task because this latest release of Windows requires a 386 processor.

I also tested Britannica Software's Algebra 1: First Semester educational software. I must say that things would have been much easier for me if the software would have displayed a menu. For some reason, the main

```
PC-Task V3.00. Copyright 1992-94 Chris Hames.  All rights reserved.

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Internet: pctask@quasar.dialix.oz.au

To start the mouse driver press LeftAmiga-P (or use PCTMOUSE.EXE).
To quit press the RightAmiga-Del.

Processor: 80286      Conventional Memory: 640K      Extended Memory:      0K
Technical:  (location $07CD74C0  allocated 1024K)
 Drive A is: DF0
 Drive B is: Unavailable
 HardDrive C is: Unavailable
 HardDrive D is: Unavailable

Current date is Thu 05-11-1995
Enter new date (mm-dd-yy): 02-04-96
Current time is  6:47:26.01a
Enter new time:


Microsoft(R) MS-DOS(R) Version 5.00
            (C)Copyright Microsoft Corp 1981-1991.

A>
```

Figure 5: PC-Task lets you have all the fun and excitement of MS-DOS, but we doubt you will want to stay there for long.

menu remained blank. However, after blindly pressing keys, I finally found my way into the main program, and found that it worked quite well, the menu situation notwithstanding.

I also tested the old version of Wing Commander. Unfortunately, I could not get this game to run properly. While trying to run it in 256 colors, the best that the emulation could do was to bring up the first main animation giving credit to Origin, the company that makes the game. I then tried reducing the number of colors to 16, which required reinstalling the game, taking over an hour to complete. The results were a little better; PC-Task was now displaying the introduction animation, complete with enemy vessels and energy weapons. The next screen that PC-Task displayed was the copy protection screen, and so I promptly entered the correct text from the manual. However, that is as far as the system would go. After pressing any and every key, the system came back with a warning telling me that the "Secret Missions Disk" was not installed on my system. So apparently this was another attack of the invisible interface; the same thing that happened with the Algebra software.

And unfortunately, what graphics and animation I did see were painfully slow, even on my 40mhz 68040 A4000. I tried running a demo version of Lemmings for the PC, and I could not get the game to display the graphics correctly in VGA, but CGA worked just fine (Figure 4).

In terms of public domain and shareware, the choice of what would run on a 286 was much larger. I tried software ranging from games to graphics processing software to a Macintosh emulation package for the PC!

A program called "Banana Com," a telecommunications package, didn't seem to recognize my modem. I experienced more problems within Windows 3.1 when dealing with the serial port. I tried running the Terminal program within Windows, and the program either didn't work, or else it crashed the emulation. I had similar problems with Trumpet Winsock: PC-Task crashed.

A call to Wonder Computers in Canada provided some clarity. It seems that PC-Task has problems dealing with the serial functions while running Windows. But I still could not get Banana Com to work, and it runs from MS-DOS directly, without Windows. I ran three graphics programs, Picture Man, WinJPEG, and FVGA, all of which seemed to run just fine.

I did find the built-in mouse driver to be somewhat unpredictable within FVGA, however; specifically in terms of getting the menus to behave correctly. I tried running Executor, a PC-based Macintosh emulation system (ShapeShifter fans, there is not too much to worry about here). Unfortunately, the program would not run. And last but not least, I ran a VGA benchmark program which tested the speed of the graphics on the system. It

PC-Task Performance Tests

DECOMPRESS AND DISPLAY A JPEG IMAGE USING WINJPEG*

PC-Task Normal - 5 minutes 40 seconds
PC-Task Turbo - 5 minutes 32 seconds

*This test involved a combination of computer processing and hard drive access

SCAN MEMORY AND HARD DRIVE FOR VIRUSES USING MICROSOFT VIRUS SCANNING SOFTWARE

PC-Task Normal - 2 minutes 15 seconds to scan memory
1 minute 43 seconds to scan hard drive
PC-Task Turbo - 2 minutes 4 seconds to scan memory
2 minutes to scan hard drive

**All tests were done on an Amiga 4000/40 @ 40mhz

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seemed to run perfectly, although very slowly.

In addition to the above problems with software incompatibility and modem problems, I had some difficulty getting the graphics boards routines to work correctly. At first, when I tried to run the emulation on my CyberVision 64 and GVP Spectrum cards, the graphics updates were actually slower than my AGA updates! After changing the parameters on the refresh, I discovered that the IMMEDIATE refresh option should not be used with graphics boards. I found a reasonable compromise at a setting of four.

Unfortunately, some of the modes cannot be set in terms of refresh variables. In particular, the 256 color modes are frozen at the IMMEDIATE refresh, which means that these modes do not do very well on either an AGA Amiga or graphics board-equipped Amiga. In addition, don't plan on using Windows in the 256 color Video 7 modes, because the mouse pointer is not visible. This is documented in the manual, and one can only assume that a fix for this problem is on the way. And one other problem that I found with the graphics handling appeared when the program opened in a window on the Workbench. At certain times when I tried to drag the PC-Window to a more accessible place on the Workbench, the entire Amiga locked up. However, the manual does state that in order to get the best stability in graphics handling, AmigaDOS 3.1 should be used.

I discovered one other problem regarding the emulation in general: whenever I tried to change the Amiga screen mode after I had quit PC-Task, the Amiga would completely lock up, and a complete warm-boot was required in order to get the Amiga back.

In Conclusion

PC-Task is a product in development. It still has a long way to go, however. I did contact Wonder Computers about the future of the product, and the future is a very bright one. It seems that the program is undergoing a complete re-write. It will include a new processor instruction set, so instead of the outdated 80286, it will emulate the 80486. And the speed will be increased considerably due to a new way of processing the code of the 486. The code of the 486 will be recompiled into 680x0 code, and therefore can be executed directly by the 680x0 processor. But until then, PC-Task is definitely in its development stages.

PC-TASK 3.1
$114.99
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•AC•

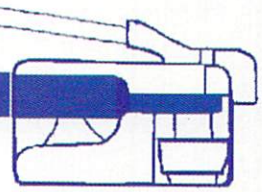
At Press Time

At press time, AC has learned that WCI is currently being held in bankruptcy pending a restructuring in Canada. We will follow with more information about this and the other products they were sponsoring in North America as soon as details are available.

on line

by Rob Hays

amiga telecommunications



Putting AMosaic to work on the World Wide Web.

If you followed along with last month's column, you should now have a working AMosaic setup. Since we are going to continue where we left off, it would be a good idea to get your copy and review.

The address I had you change in the AMosaic icon is more properly known as a URL, or Universal Resource Location. Just like the more familiar e-mail address, the URL consists of several different parts. Let's use the new URL for the AMosaic home page from last month as an example.

http://www.omnipresence.com/Amosaic/2.0/

The first section, http: specifies the protocol the various internet computers must use to transfer the information to you. In this case they will use the Hyper Text Transfer Protocol. The server, or home computer system where the information resides, is designated by // www.omnipresence.com. The last section of the URL is the path to the specific page, in this case /Amosaic/2.0/. Just like the directory structure of your disks, we want to go to the 2.0 subdirectory of the AMosaic directory.

URL's can be confusing, and tricky to type in correctly, but it is important to know about them and how they work. While it can be immensely enjoyable to surf various links at random, often it is important to be able to go to a specific spot at once. The hotlist feature of your browser allows you to save a list of URL's that can be accessed directly by selecting from the list.

If everything is set up correctly, and you are using Workbench 3.0 or above, Figure 1 is the result. If you are using Workbench 2.1, or do not have the necessary DataTypes installed, the Figure 2 is what to expect. The difference of course is the graphics. These are known as in-line images, and can be a major portion of many Web pages. They can also be a major source of frustration.

Every Web page AMosaic, or any browser accesses, is loaded in pieces. First, the text elements are loaded and displayed. This usually happens at once. Then each different graphic element is transferred, de-coded through the appropriate DataType, and displayed. At a time when the Internet is not busy, and with a page containing only a few in-line images, this may add a few seconds to the time needed to display the page. If the net is busy and transfer times stretch, you may find yourself waiting minutes for all of the graphics in a complicated

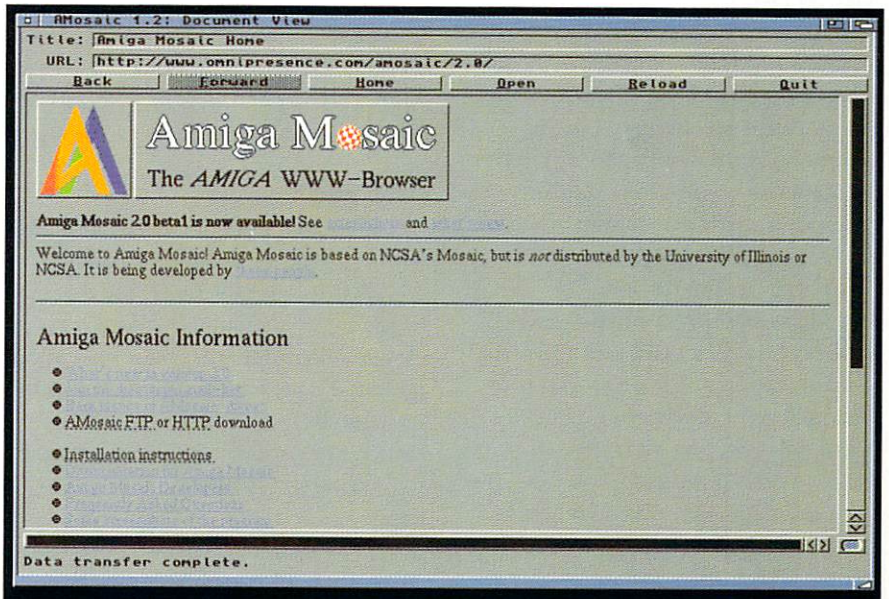


Figure 1: This is what you see if everything is set up correctly, and you are using Workbench 3.0.

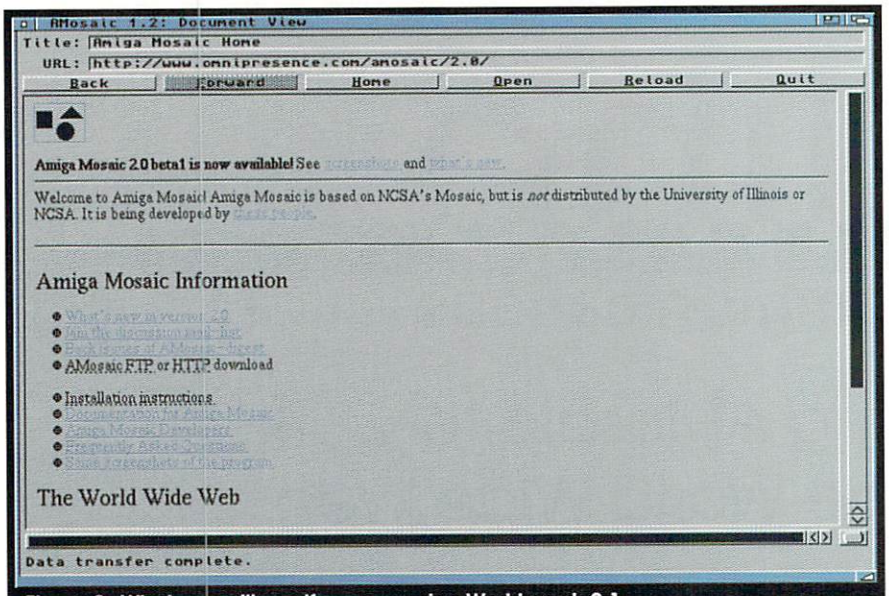


Figure 2: What you will see if you are using Workbench 2.1, or you do not have the necessary DataTypes installed.

page to be displayed. These are times I have seen while using a 14,400 bps modem connected to a minimal A1200 with the standard processor, and a couple of megabytes of fast ram. Obviously a faster modem and processor will speed up the displaying of images.

If you have Workbench 3.0 or above, one of the first links you should follow from the AMosaic home page is the one labeled AMosaic HTTP download. This will take you to the location of the latest version of AMosaic. Click on the name of the file you want, and it will be downloaded directly to your Amiga. Be sure to select the Options/Load To Local Disk menu item first. Figure 3 shows the Amiga home page viewed with this new version of AMosaic.

If the net is busy and transfer times stretch, you may find yourself waiting minutes for all of the graphics in a complicated page to be displayed.

If you return to a previously viewed page shortly after leaving, it will likely be displayed at once, because AMosaic maintains a file of images called a cache. The size of this image cache is determined by the amount of hard drive space you have available on your System partition. You can turn off the loading of the in-line images if you wish to speed up your Web surfing session.

Remembering the hyper-text nature of the Web, you will notice that certain words will be displayed in a different color, or otherwise highlighted. If you pass your mouse pointer over these areas, and often the in-line images as well, you will see URL's displayed at the bottom of your screen. These areas are the links that will take you to other Web pages when you click on them.

Hints and Tips

If you have spent much time with AMosaic, you probably have discovered that it is not the most stable of programs. It sometimes crashes your system for no apparent reason. I have had the 1.2 version bring my Amiga to its knees through the simple act of resizing the AMosaic window while it was trying to establish connection to a page.

Thankfully, even the beta version currently available of AMosaic 2.0 is much more stable. This stability can be further enhanced with a few simple precautions. Once you get the new version installed, click once on the icon, and select Information from the Icon menu on Workbench. Click on the box labeled New, type the following into the string gadget, and click on Save.

Stack=50000

Occasionally during your on-line session with AMosaic, select the Options/Clear Image Cache menu item. This will delete the accumulated image files, and prevent your System partition from filling up and causing a crash. You should also be sure you have the latest version of MUI installed.

Unfortunately, it seems that no matter the precautions taken, a crash is almost inevitable if you spend enough time using AMosaic. If you configured your modem correctly during the installation process, you should still be connected after a reboot. If this happens, and if you used the iNTERiNSTALL package, simply double click again on the Internet icon. Then restart AMosaic and you can resume surfing. If you installed everything manually, restart AmiTCP and MUI, then AMosaic.

Updates

In the January column, I reported that using the text based Lynx Web browser on GEnie required a separate terminal program. Since then, the automated terminal program Aladdin has been updated and now automatically switches to VT100 emulation, eliminating the need for a separate program for browsing on GEnie.

Also in the January issue was an update concerning the BBS info published for the A.I.M.A. World BBS in the November 1995 issue. Current information for this BBS is listed below.

Finally, I received e-mail from Ken Rumsey stating that his AmiTrek BBS listed in the January issue is no longer in operation, and the listed phone number is now a dedicated fax line.

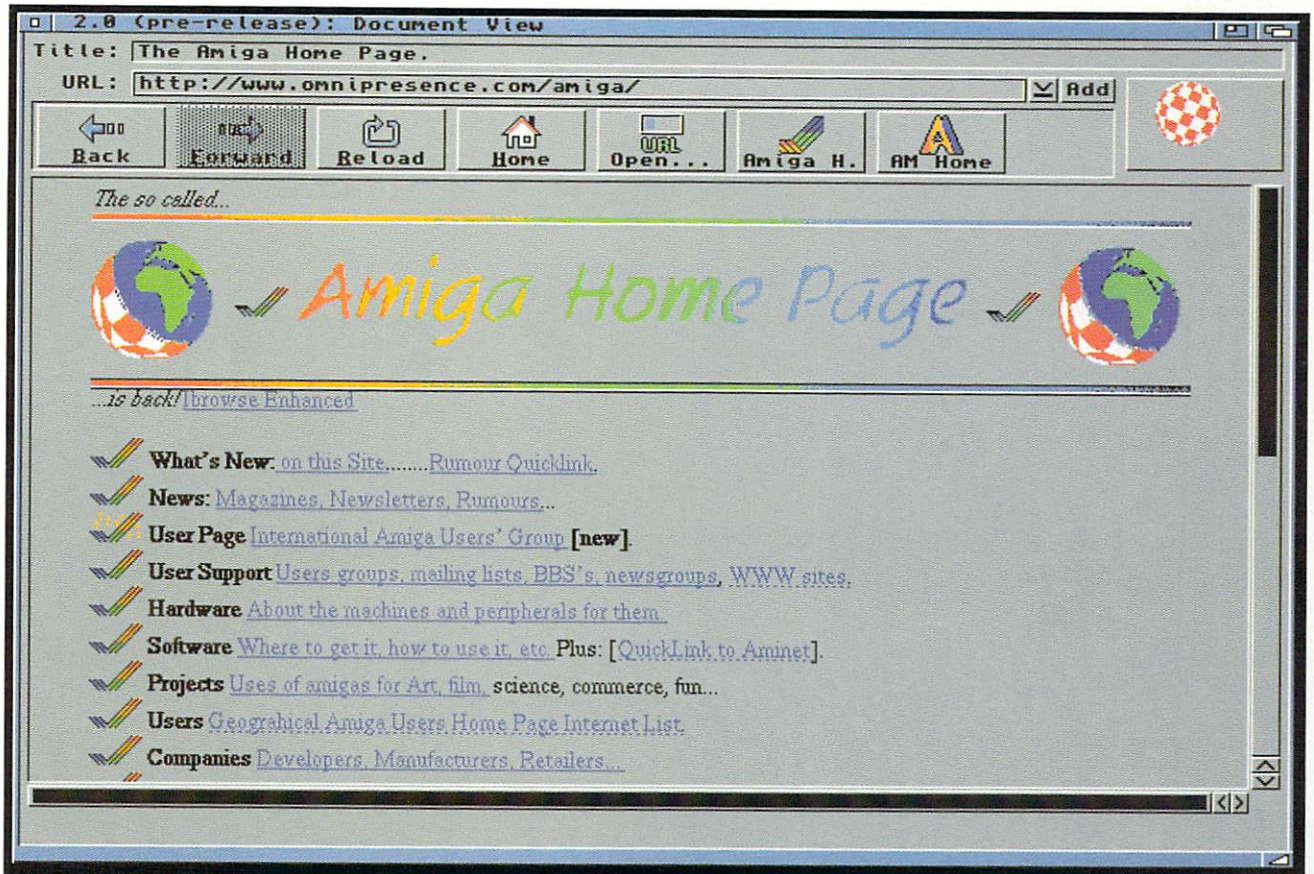


Figure 3: The Amiga home page viewed with the new version of AMosaic.

Hot List Of The Month

If you have AMosaic working, but want to fine tune your setup, check out: http://www.cris.com/~Kainaw/tcp/index.shtml

This is an Amiga page maintained by C.S. Wagner that is loaded with information concerning AmiTCP, Web browsers, and other programs that work with them.

For the latest concerning the Amiga, go to: http://www.amiga.de

This page is maintained by Dr. Peter Kittel for the express purpose of letting us have access to the latest news from Amiga Technologies.

Who Ya Gonna Call?

Here are some more Amiga BBS's you might want to call.

NAME: A.I.M.A. World
BBS PHONE: 909-428-2029
PHONE:909-428-2270
SPEEDS SUPPORTED: Up to 38,400 bps
CONTACT: R. Dewey Mullins III

NAME: Cobras Triangle
PHONE:201-402-0434
SPEEDS SUPPORTED: Up to 14,400bps
CONTACT: Damon Evans

NAME: Starfleet Command
PHONE:201-402-1072
SPEEDS SUPPORTED: Up to 16,800bps
CONTACT: Ben Liebowitz

NAME: The Bard's Tavern
PHONE:817-243-5110
SPEEDS SUPPORTED: Up to 33,600bps V34+ CONTACT:
mikelynn@scs.unt.edu

Where To Find Me

R.Hays5 on GEnie
RHAYS on Delphi
72764,2066 on CompuServe
Rob Hays on Portal

Internet users, my provider has recently made a change that allows a shorter version of my email address: rhays@intersource.com.

For U.S.Mail:
Rob Hays
P.O.Box 194
Bloomington, IN 47402

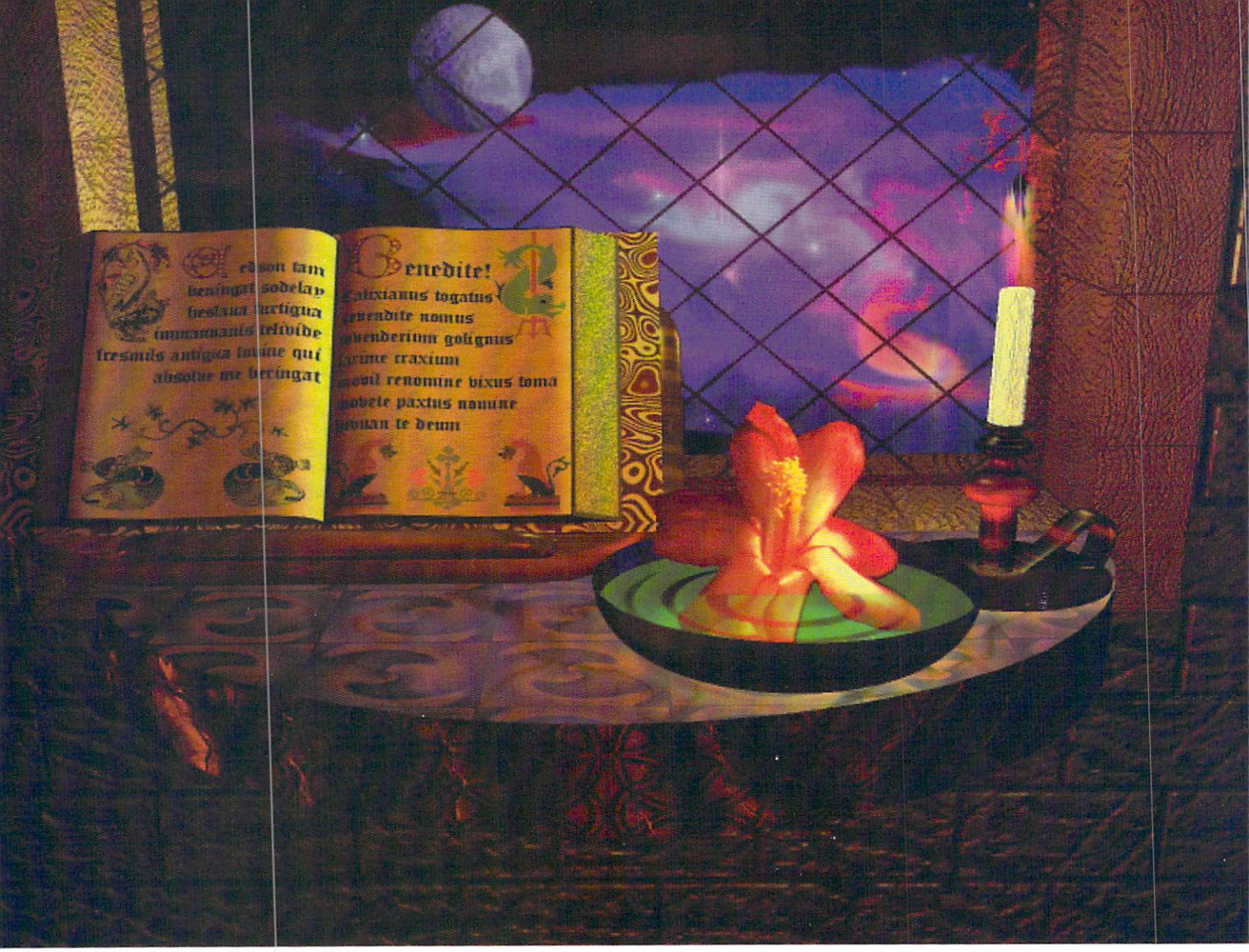
Please include a SASE if you need a personal reply.

If you run an Amiga specific BBS, send me the information callers will need to access your system. Phone number(s), modem speeds, software settings, etc. As a service to the Amiga community I will include the information I receive in this column from time to time.

If you come across any World Wide Web sites you feel would be of interest to the Amiga community, pass them along for inclusion in the Hotlist of the Month. Send the info to any of my addresses above.

That's all for now. See you on line!

•AC•



Creating Candle Flames with Imagemaster and Aladdin 4D

by Charles F. Cavanaugh

Attempting to achieve realistic worlds colored by our imaginations is what drives many of us to spend countless hours in front of our Amigas. What enhances this process is the special program or programs that manage to help us realize our visions, and, at the same time, startle us with new discoveries and explorations.

Aladdin 4D, and its companion piece for this project, Imagemaster, are two such programs. Each is complex, without being needlessly daunting. Each of these programs allows the user to bring forth his own creative skill without being hindered by technical conundrums.

Aladdin 4D is a 3D program with a very unique feature. It has the ability to generate realistic gases which can emulate anything from a cloud to a star-studded nebula. I have always been interested in dark, fantasy-like settings in my graphics work, so I have long sought to create realistic torch and candle flames. The gas feature in Aladdin goes a long way in generating realistic torch flames.

By determining the right turbulence, color, and motion, you can create fantastic torch effects, which can actually be flown through in the latest version of Aladdin 4D. But these flame effects are somewhat ethereal, and have an other-worldly look which are not always desirable. Candle flames are subtle, dense wisps of movement which would require great efforts in using Aladdin 4D's gas effect alone.

Enter Imagemaster

Imagemaster is a program that has a durable history of innovative image-processing techniques. In one of its more recent revisions, the folks at Black Belt added a few unique special effects to the IM roster, one of which is

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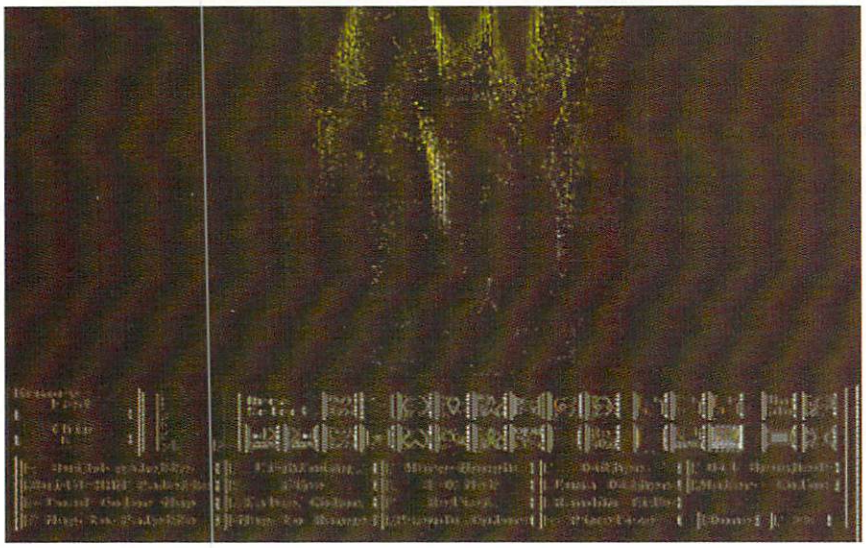

Fire. I was thrilled to see this because I know how well the graphics output of Imagemaster, whether still-frame or animation, can be utilized by Aladdin 4D (See Aladdin 4D Tutorial #10 by Shamms Mortier on lens flair creation, *Amazing Computing*, Oct, 1994).

Aladdin 4D is a fantastic manipulator of bitmap images. Flares and the Fountain particle system of Aladdin can take still or animated bitmaps and do marvelous things with them (Imagine a chalice brimming over with bubbles, and each bubble has a morphing face on it. Incredible!). The output of Imagemaster's Fire special effect, saved as individual frames of an animation, can be applied to an Aladdin Flare polygon, and then carefully poised over a modelled candle. Paired with an animated light source, numerous evocative effects can be obtained.

Imagemaster is a program that has a durable history of innovative image-processing techniques.

Basic Steps

In Imagemaster, compose your fire by first creating a new buffer. Click on Buffers in the main menu, then New Buffer, then Custom. Give your buffer an X and Y dimension of 200 pixels each, and then initialize to Color Black. After the program creates the buffer, click on Process in the Main Menu, then Special F/X.

Before clicking on Fire, choose to create the fire with a rectangular base, since the fire effect will actually be created over the area you choose to process. Click on the tool, Rectangle from Corner, and then Fire. You must then draw a rectangle (somewhat blindly) at the bottom of the screen. Then you will be presented with all of your Fire options, which include Color for Tip, End, Middle, and Base, and a variety of numeric settings which include such things as wobble and turbidity. Fortunately, there are presets, which include Candle, Torch, Forest, Logs, and Oil Wick. Each of these automatically configures the parameters for the optimum look. For my project, I bypassed IM's candle setting, which was too blocky for my tastes, and chose Torch as the most interesting Flame effect.

This endeavor produces a single image, and there is no direct way in this menu area to create an animation. Imagemaster, with its wonderful hypertext manual, comes to the rescue. With its excellent tutorials on animation and ARexx scripting, IM guides you through the process of animating fire. I am no programmer, and even ARexx intimidates me, so imagine my surprise when I found out how easy it was to write a cool script which suited my needs perfectly. It did require some work, however.

In the section on Fire, IM cryptically refers to "trending the propagation option" for stunning effects. This particular trick modulates some of the flame parameters over time so you achieve a looping flame effect. Crypticism aside, these guys were right. Once you do the work, the effect is stunning, and you must see it to believe it.

I have saved you some labor by providing the ARexx script I wrote and used for this project. Create the animation by enabling the Filmstrip (allowing you to see each frame as its created, and viewing the animation in a small, postage-sized window), and then entering the Multi-Frame Sequence area from File I/O in the Main Menu of IM. This area allows you to set the number of frames, pinpoint the destination file(s), and select any ARexx script you would like to apply.

After setting the number of frames, and selecting the Primary Buffer (This is the black 200 x 200 buffer we described earlier; we're starting from scratch now), click on Set Scripts. Clear the Anim writer scripts (we need individual frames for Aladdin), and click on 'Set' next to the Pre-render Script window. This will give you a file requester in which you may select the script TrendFire.rexx from wherever you may have placed it.

In the Multi-frame Sequencer, make sure you have chosen an appropriate destination for your frames. To do an actual save, you must have 'Save Result' selected. Click on Run List to actually start the process of composing the frames (For my anim, I created 20 frames).

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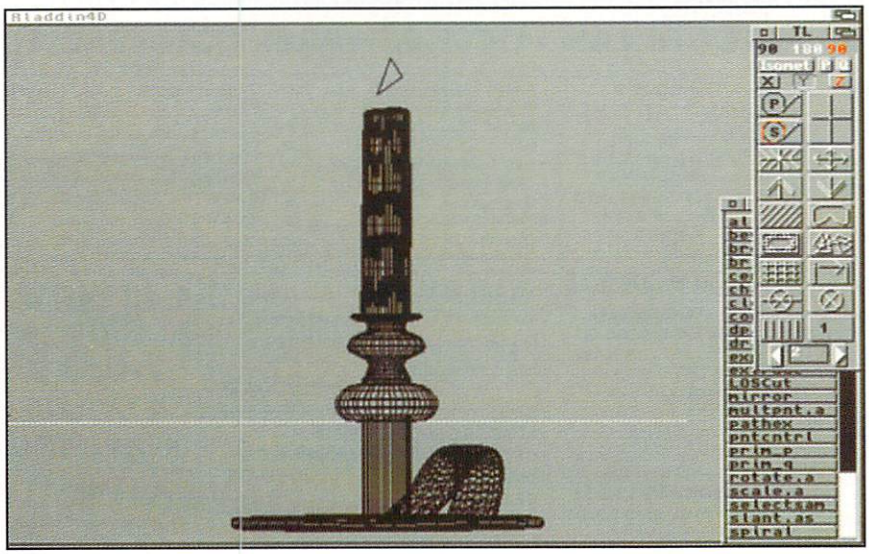

The TrendFire.rexx script takes you through a number of spline-based controls for each parameter of the flame. Trending the propagation actually means having a straight spline from 0 to 360 when that window comes up. For the other parameters, I actually copied the values from the Torch preset, and applied them in the spline controls.

As mentioned before, a good program serves you well by doing the tasks that you require of it; a great program inspires you to go beyond your initial conception and try for something far greater. A nifty flame is nothing without an atmospheric setting. Aladdin is a 3D program suffused with potential atmospheric and special effects. For this article, I'll deal with how we apply our animated flame to a flare object. The rest, the modelling, rendering, and other aspects of 3D work, I will leave to you.

Fortunately, the flare objects are very easy to understand and use in your projects. In Aladdin, choose the menu item, Flare Add (shift-x). The Flare Source control opens up, allowing numerous options for treating bitmap images created for flare use. The default settings are fine to begin with (these can be adjusted later to suit your own tastes). Click Accept, and a triangle appears at the Attach Point (Either the central point of the 3D universe, or the last selected point of a polygon). This polygon serves as the flare object. It requires a texture to be visible, so you must select the triangle, press keyboard-t to get the texture lists requester, add a list, and go to the Member Control Panel to assign the parameters.

Our flame will be a Normal Projection type on the Y axis. Click on Select, and you will be taken to the Procedural Resource window. Click on Show Bitmap, then Load, and a file requester appears through which we may load our flame animation. Aladdin requires individual frames with a numeric extension (.001,.0001, etc.). Find the directory where your Flame frames are located, and load the first frame (fire.0001 in my case). Aladdin immediately recognizes this as an animated texture and counts the frames for future loading as its own animation rendering takes place. Back at the Texture Control window, click on 'Suggested', and Aladdin sets the proper parameters for this texture type.

There are many ways to display the flame. The flare objects in Aladdin have traditionally used transparency mapping to composite with a background scene. That means if a part of a flare is very dark, it will be very transparent; if it is very light, it will be opaque. If you are using a dark background in your scene (as I have), this traditional way works very well.

If your flame appears in front of a lightly colored scene or objects, the flame may appear to be too transparent. In the new version of Aladdin, you have the option of making the flare object completely opaque (in the Flare Source Control window). This creates the problem of aliasing, and opacity in the dark areas of the flame, which we definitely do not want. There is a solution, however.

You may use Imagemaster, AdPro, or a paint program to make an Alpha channel for the flame, and then use this image as the first member of your texture list. If you do this, you must set the projection type to ALPHA. Add a second texture list, and use this for the flame.

Aside from further niceties in both programs, that's basically it. Aladdin has marvelous animation controls, and I encourage you to explore and take full advantage of them. The candle flame can shoot up, or fade out. A red, turbulent gas can be added to create wisps of smoke and flame. Other flares or fountains can swoop in, adding magical sparkles or other effects. Red and Yellow lights need to be added to

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provide the glow shed upon other objects to give a vivid realism. These endeavors and more will draw you in, and the engaging grasp of both programs will be hard to escape.

```
/* TrendFire.rexx */

/* The following line of the code is absolutely necessary if you wish to
** create animations in the multiframe sequencer. It determines the
current
** frame and the total number of frames.
*/

parse arg iframe nframe '"' renderfile '"'
address('IM_Port');

/* The following code sets up the parameters for the fire effect.
Trenddraw
** is the Imagemaster command that creates the graphic spline control
windows that
** you will see. The first two numbers at the end of each line specify the
** range for each parameter; the third number is the default value you
will
** see when the control window opens.
*/

   if iframe=1 then do
      'trenddraw "propagate" 1 '||nframe||' 0 360 0 "Propagation"';
      'trenddraw "length" 1 '||nframe||' 0 1000 400 "length"';
      'trenddraw "Direct" 1 ' ||nframe||' 0 360 0 "Direction"';
      'trenddraw "seed" 1 ' ||nframe||' 0 100 5 "Seed"';
      'trenddraw "Hstruct" 1 ' ||nframe||' 0 200 12 "Horizontal
            Structures"';
      'trenddraw "Hturb" 1 ' ||nframe||' 0 100 50 "Horizontal Turbidity"';
      'trenddraw "Vstruct" 1 ' ||nframe||' 0 200 5 "Vertical Structures"';
      'trenddraw "Vturb" 1 ' ||nframe||' 0 100 100 "Vertical Turbidity"';
      'trenddraw "wobble" 1 ' ||nframe||' 0 20 10 "Wobbles"';
      'trenddraw "wobamt" 1 ' ||nframe||' 0 100 50 "Wobble Amount"';
      'trenddraw "distort" 1 ' ||nframe||' 0 100 20 "Distortion"';
      options results;
      'messagelow Select the Base Color';
      'askrgb';
      colors=result;
      parse var colors bred','bgrn','bblu;
      'messagelow Select the Mid Color';
      'askrgb';
      colors=result;
      parse var colors mred','mgrn','mblu;
      'messagelow Select the End Color';
      'askrgb';
      colors=result;
      parse var colors ered','egrn','eblu;
      'messagelow Select the Tip Color';
      'askrgb';
      colors=result;
      parse var colors tred','tgrn','tblu;
      options;
   end;

/* Trendget in the following code picks up the values you set in the
spline
** control window for each parameter, and then sets it for each frame of
** the animation.
*/

options results;
'trendget "propagate" ' iframe;
time=result;
'trendget "length" ' iframe;
length=result;
'trendget "Direct" ' iframe;
direct=result;
'trendget "seed" ' iframe;
seed=result;
'trendget "Hstruct" ' iframe;
hstruct=result;
'trendget "Hturb" ' iframe;
hturb=result;
'trendget "Vstruct" ' iframe;
vstruct=result;
'trendget "Vturb" ' iframe;
vturb=result;
'trendget "wobble" ' iframe;
wobble=result;
'trendget "wobamt" ' iframe;
wobamt=result;
'trendget "distort" ' iframe;
distort=result;
options;

/* The following code sets up a rectangle at the bottom of a 200 X 200
** buffer screen, above which the flame will be drawn. This should be
** changed if you use a different sized buffer.
*/

'rect 50 150 150 200';

/* Finally, the fire is drawn with the command 'fire' with all the
** individual parameters assigned to it. The 'finish' command is another
** necessary command in creating anims.  If the current frame (iframe) is
** not the same as the total number of frames (nframe), the script will
** repeat, picking up the values for each new frame with the 'trendget'
** command.The 'finish' command will terminate the program once the value
** of nframe is met by iframe.
*/

'fire 'bred bgrn bblu mred mgrn mblu ered egrn eblu tred tgrn tblu length,
Direct time seed Hstruct Hturb Vstruct Vturb wobble wobamt distort;

'finish';
```

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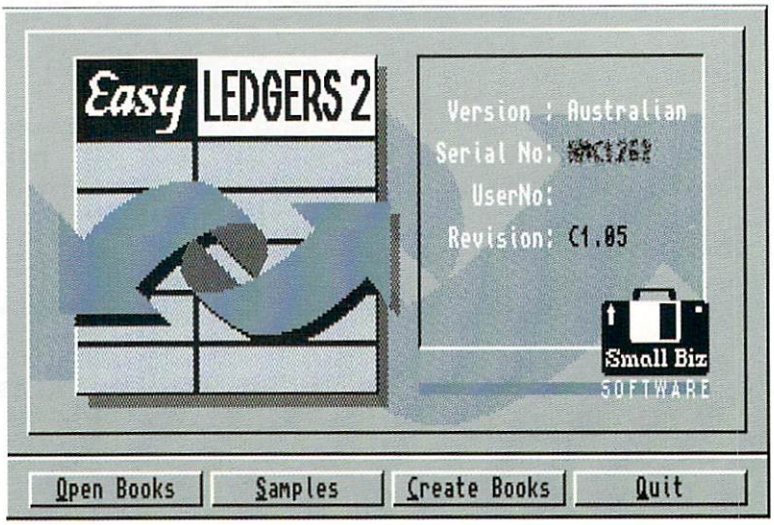

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Reviewed by John Bishop

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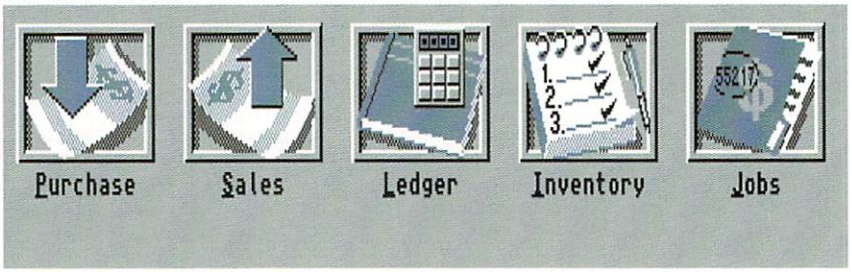

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As far as exporting, Easy Ledger not only allows you to use standard ASCII text files, but it will also let you export data in Lotus 123 format or Maxiplan. The program even allows an option for which items you want to export and what ranges.

In fact, range setting is available in any manner of working with Easy Ledgers 2.0. If you need a special report of a specific area of your clientele, it is just a few mouse clicks in the on-screen menus and you can send your report to the printer, the screen, or a disk.

If you have a complicated group of reports required from a series of vendors or customers who are not necessarily in order, you can send the selected group one at a time to a disk file or dump the whole set and edit the undesirables in your favorite editor. This one feature offers a wide variety of opportunities in creating your own reports, using the data in other systems, and more. All of this is rarely, if ever, offered by other systems.

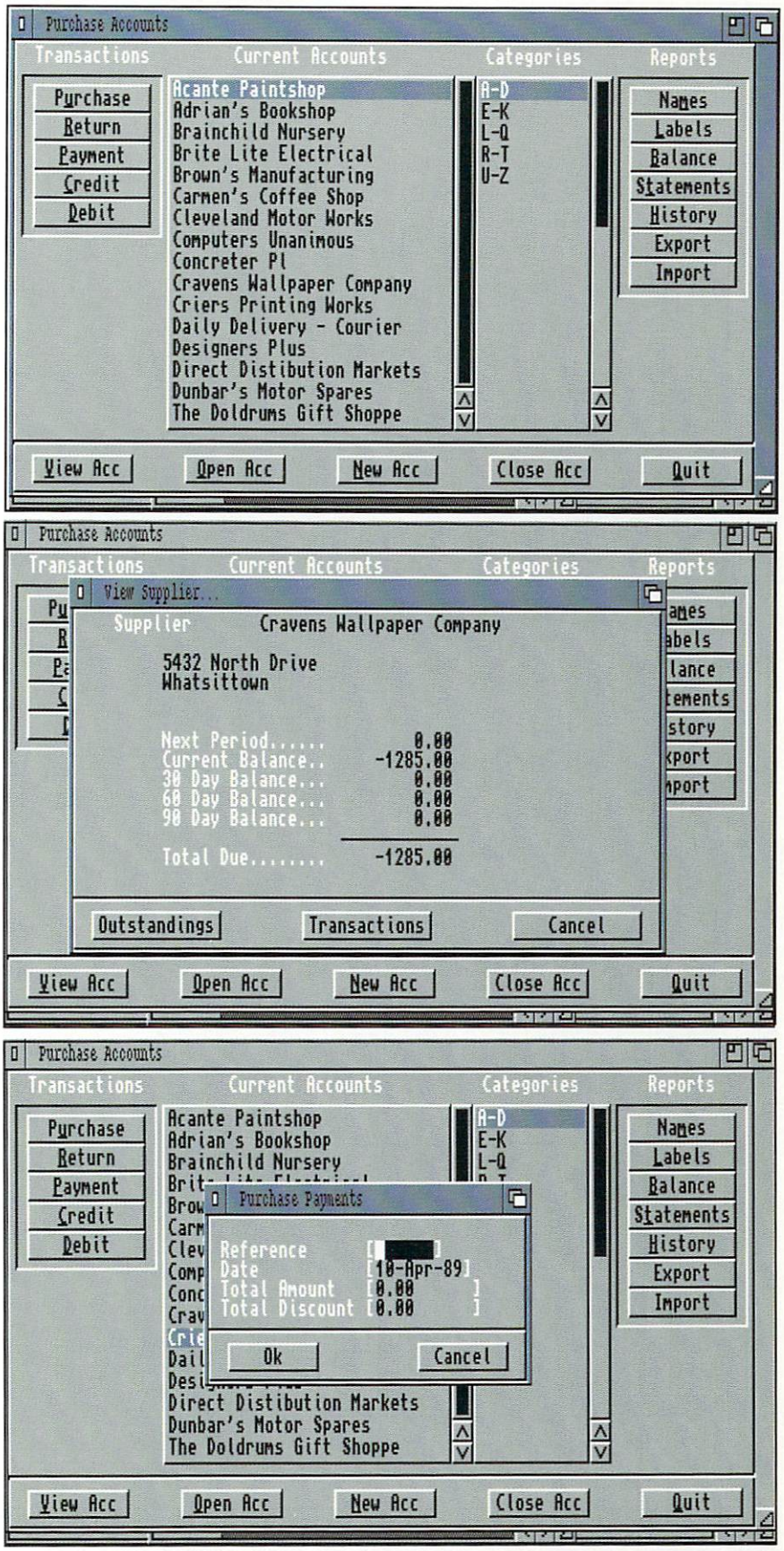
This one feature offers a wide variety of opportunities in creating your own reports, using the data in other systems, and more.

Setup

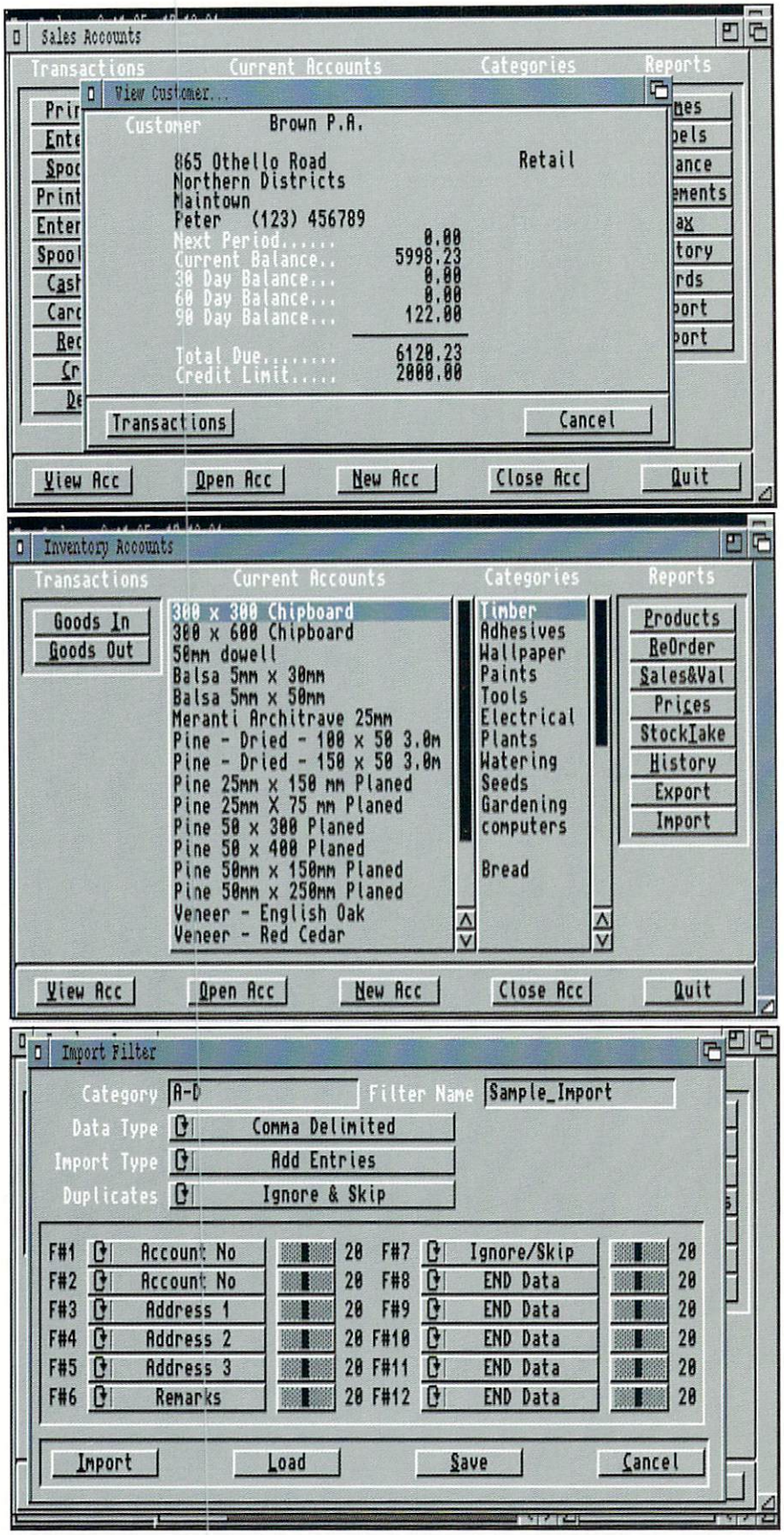
If you are just starting out and do not have a database or spreadsheet of your accounts, Easy Ledgers 2.0 can still incorporate your information. However, as in all accounting systems, you will need to have some idea of where you are going with it.

You should know your starting invoice number, have the names and addresses of your suppliers and customers, and an idea of the types of accounts you will need before you start. While Easy Ledgers will automatically establish your books for you, it is important for you to establish the accounts that are important to your company if they are not readily offered.

Setup only takes a few moments and can be painlessly automatic. In addition, should you forget a ledger account or any other pertinent information, Easy Ledgers will allow you to create the entry from the appropriate section (General Ledger, Sales, Purchases, etc.) at any time.



Easy Ledgers 2.0 uses screens to move you through your accounting data. From the list of Purchasing accounts (top), to a review of an account (middle), and on to a posting of a payment (bottom) the screens show you exactly what to do.



While accounts are easy to review and reports are quickly created, one of the best features of Easy Ledgers 2.0 is its ability to import and export (bottom) information for use in spreadsheets, databases, editors, and more.

Conclusions

While no one is going to fall in love with an accounting program, a program that saves you time, accurately tracks your efforts, and even gives you reports at the drop of a hat should at least be offered a bonus occasionally. In our tests, we found the system to be a good addition to our efforts.

However, any accounting program is best reviewed over a full function of a business. Unfortunately, we have only been testing Easy Ledgers 2.0 for approximately two weeks. While our tests have been complete and we believe the product has stood up well, some accounting systems do not create their idiosyncrasies until later in the year of a company. We will keep an eye on the program and report any failings if they become apparent in the future.

There was only one main thing that bothered me about Easy Ledgers 2.0. It requires a dongle on your number two mouse port. While this is considered an excellent way to safeguard a developer's software from piracy, it is extremely difficult to accept this in any productivity package. Anyone using an accounting program is probably not doing it for fun—just a guess. If someone has their entire business in a software program, they will most probably want a software package they can depend on and will not be using a pirated copy. By the same token, it becomes extremely vexing if you have reports or taxes due and you suddenly discover the dongle is not in the port, the drawer, the file, or wherever you could swear you left it last.

Dongles aside, this program has the standard features you would expect from an accounting program with a few neat tricks that everyone can use.

Easy Ledgers 2.0
$299.00 US
Small-Biz Software Pty. Ltd.
P.O. Box 24
Golden Beach, Queensland 4551
Australia
Tel 61 74 91 9190
FAX 61 74 92 6860

•AC•

North American Amiga Dealers

Need to find a local Amiga dealer? Check out this list (effective February 2, 1996) and find a supplier close to you. Amazing Computing offers this list as a public service to the Amiga community. Any corrections should be forwarded to Service Management Group at (410) 715-6850, via Fax at (410) 992-9979 or (410) 715-6850, or via Internet email at pbielski@interramp.com

Dealer Name	City	State/Prov		Phone
Computer Shop of Calgary, Ltd.	Calgary	AB	CAN	403-243-4356
Wonder Computers, Inc.	Calgary	AB	CAN	403-253-0009
A 1 Computers	Edmonton	AB	CAN	403-448-0632
Software Supermart	Edmonton	AB	CAN	403-425-0691
Desktop Computing	Red Deer	AB	CAN	403-342-4444
TVI Interactive Systems, Inc.	Burnaby	BC	CAN	604-298-5657
VFX Video, Inc.	Richmond	BC	CAN	604-244-3000
Wonder Computers, Inc.	Richmond	BC	CAN	604-279-4240
J.L. Fotovideo Camera Ctrs.	Winnipeg	MB	CAN	204-475-8730
Corey's Computing	Winnipeg	MB	CAN	204-654-3194
Interactive Computer Sys., Ltd.	Fredericton	NB	CAN	506-458-8858
Young Monkey Studio	Fredericton	NB	CAN	506-459-7088
Animax Multimedia, Inc.	Dartmouth	NS	CAN	902-468-2629
Atlantis Kobetek, Inc.	Halifax	NS	CAN	902-422-6556
Legendary Design Technologies	Brantford	ON	CAN	519-753-6120
The Computer & You	Etobicoke	ON	CAN	416-231-0205
Forest Diskasaurus	Forest	ON	CAN	519-786-2454
Visual Vision	Georgetown	ON	CAN	905-873-4959
J.L. Fotovideo Camera Ctrs.	Hamilton	ON	CAN	905-575-3000
Altair Electronics, Ltd.	Kingston	ON	CAN	613-384-3876
Zen Computing	Leamington	ON	CAN	519-322-5893
D.F. Technologies	London	ON	CAN	519-439-3181
Wonder Computers, Inc.	London	ON	CAN	519-681-0004
Cancom Audio Visual Inc.	Markham	ON	CAN	905-470-0466
Computer Express, Inc.	Mississauga	ON	CAN	905-672-5595
Amiga North	North Bay	ON	CAN	705-495-3605
APIX Systems	North York	ON	CAN	416-750-9909
National Amiga Canada	Oakville	ON	CAN	905-845-1949
Media Direct	Orillia	ON	CAN	705-327-7583
Wonder Computers, Inc.	Ottawa	ON	CAN	613-596-2542
Valley Soft	Pembroke	ON	CAN	613-732-7700
Wonder Computers, Inc.	Scarborough	ON	CAN	416-286-0001
Atlas Computers & Consulting	Sudbury	ON	CAN	705-522-1923
OBY's Amigo Computing Shop	Sudbury	ON	CAN	705-524-5826
Electronics 2000	Thunder Bay	ON	CAN	807-577-1759
Comspec Communications	Toronto	ON	CAN	416-785-3553
Randomize Computers	Tottenham	ON	CAN	905-939-8391
Centre Maxi-Mini	Amos	QU	CAN	819-732-6464
Informatique Richard Lamond	Lac Des 16 Iles	QU	CAN	514-226-7506
Gfx Base Electronics	LaSalle	QU	CAN	514-367-2575
Wonder Computers, Inc.	Montreal	QU	CAN	514-279-0002
Electromike, Inc.	Quebec	QU	CAN	418-681-4138
Info Plus	Trois-Rivieres	QU	CAN	819-373-0894
System Compbac, Inc.	Tokyo		JPN	81-3-3837-868
The Computer Image	Birmingham	AL	USA	205-933-8970
Pro Music, Inc.	Fairbanks	AK	USA	907-456-1994
The Micro Shop, Inc.	Little Rock	AR	USA	501-568-8023
SoftWood, Inc.	Phoenix	AZ	USA	800-247-8314
Troxell Communications, Inc.	Phoenix	AZ	USA	602-437-7240
Wentek	Scottsdale	AZ	USA	602-483-7200
Transdata Systems Co., Ltd.	Anaheim	CA	USA	714-630-8711
Connecting Point	Calabasas	CA	USA	818-222-3822
Visionsoft	Carmel	CA	USA	408-626-2633
Century Systems	La Habra	CA	USA	310-697-6977
The Lively Computer	La Mesa	CA	USA	619-589-9455
HT Electronics	Milpitas	CA	USA	408-934-7700
Applied Computer Systems	North Highlands	CA	USA	916-338-2000
TS Computers	North Hollywood	CA	USA	818-760-4445
Alex Electronics	Paradise	CA	USA	916-872-0896
La Bine Productions	Rialto	CA	USA	909-355-9756
Wave Systems	San Diego	CA	USA	619-495-9283
Sur-Tech	Santa Clara	CA	USA	408-496-6664
Megagem	Santa Maria	CA	USA	805-349-1104
Anti Gravity Products	Santa Monica	CA	USA	310-393-9747
Amiga Exchange	Torrance	CA	USA	310-534-3187
Compuhelp Computers	Van Nuys	CA	USA	818-901-0280
The Computer Room	Aurora	CO	USA	303-696-8973
Davis Audio-Visual, Inc.	Denver	CO	USA	303-455-1122
Softown, Inc.	Danbury	CT	USA	203-797-8080
Computer Source	Fairfield	CT	USA	203-336-3100
Derrick Electronics	Hamden	CT	USA	203-248-7227
Videology	Newtown	CT	USA	203-270-9000
Infotronics	Woodbury	CT	USA	203-263-5350
DeVine Computer Sales	Newark	DE	USA	302-738-9046
Eagle Computers & Video	Melbourne	FL	USA	407-951-9732
Harddrivers Co.	Merrit Island	FL	USA	407-453-5805
Centennial Video Systems	Miami	FL	USA	305-633-2200
Creative Equipment, Intl.	Miami	FL	USA	305-266-2800
Miami Picture & Sound company	Miami	FL	USA	305-666-4055
Computer Video Associates	Pinellas Park	FL	USA	813-576-5242
Apogee Technologies	Sarasota	FL	USA	813-355-6121
Discount Computer Sales	Sunrise	FL	USA	954-797-9402
Showcase Video	Atlanta	GA	USA	404-325-7676
ACS Computer & Video	Norcross	GA	USA	770-263-9190
Hawkeye Communications	Coralville	IA	USA	319-354-3354
Computer Advantage	Des Moines	IA	USA	515-252-6167
Commodore Computer Center	Boise	ID	USA	208-342-3401
Maxximum Video Creations	Boise	ID	USA	208-322-3091
Blackrock Computers Plus	Pocatello	ID	USA	208-232-0012
Trend Port U.S.	Algonquin	IL	USA	708-854-9671
MicroTech Solutions	Aurora	IL	USA	708-851-3033
Micro-PACE, Inc.	Champaign	IL	USA	217-356-1884
Select Solutions	Champaign	IL	USA	800-322-1261
Ring Video Systems	Riverside	IL	USA	708-442-0009
Keyboard Studio	Urbana	IL	USA	217-328-3975
Digital Arts	Bloomington	IN	USA	812-330-0124
R.C. Instruments	Cicero	IN	USA	317-984-9400
CPU Inc.	Indianapolis	IN	USA	317-577-3677
Desktop Video Systems	Lenexa	KS	USA	913-782-8888
Mission Electronics, Inc.	Lenexa	KS	USA	913-894-8480
Video Lab	Shawnee	KS	USA	913-631-0045
Smith Audio Visual, Inc.	Topeka	KS	USA	913-235-3481
Icon Computers & Software	Bridgewater	MA	USA	508-697-6060
Crimson Tech	Cambridge	MA	USA	617-868-5150
The Camera Company	Norwood	MA	USA	617-769-7810
Kipp Visual Systems	Gaithersburg	MD	USA	301-670-7906
EMH Systems	Auburn	ME	USA	207-784-2048
Amiga Crossing	Cumberland	ME	USA	207-829-3959
Thalner Electronic Labs	Ann Arbor	MI	USA	313-761-4506
Computer Link, Inc.	Garden City	MI	USA	313-522-6005
Slipped Disk	Madison Heights	MI	USA	810-546-3475
Spectrum Computer Product	Prudenville	MI	USA	517-366-8569
Alpha Video	Edina	MN	USA	800-388-0008
A/V Solutions	St. Paul	MN	USA	612-698-1175
Raymond Commodore Amiga	St. Paul	MN	USA	612-642-9890
Data Grafix	Sprintfield	MO	USA	417-882-1899
VIP Systems, Inc.	Chapel Hill	NC	USA	919-968-9477
Magic Page Products	Winston-Salem	NC	USA	910-785-3695
Amicom Computer Technology	Omaha	NE	USA	402-556-6160
System Eyes Computer Store	Merrimack	NH	USA	603-424-1188
Sir Render A/V	Mays Landing	NJ	USA	609-625-0472
KBI Systems	Mountainside	NJ	USA	908-654-3600
Integrated Teknologies, Inc.	Roselle	NJ	USA	908-245-1313
Amiga Lynx Network Co.	Saddle Brook	NJ	USA	201-368-0153
Electro-Tech	Las Vegas	NV	USA	702-435-3201
The Microworks	Buffalo	NY	USA	716-873-1856
Mr. Hardware	Central Islip	NY	USA	516-234-8110
Microbyte Computers & Video	Churchville	NY	USA	716-293-3365
Area 52, Inc.	Coram	NY	USA	516-476-1615
Amigo Business Computers	East Northport	NY	USA	516-757-7334
Better Concepts, Inc.	Garnerville	NY	USA	914-786-1711
Armato's Pro Video	Glendale	NY	USA	718-628-6800
Revels-Bey Music	Hempstead	NY	USA	516-565-9404
CTL Electronics	New York	NY	USA	212-233-0754
Tri-State Camera, Inc.	New York	NY	USA	212-633-2290
Seismic Business Systems	Poughkeepsie	NY	USA	914-462-4518
T.J.'s Unlimited	Rochester	NY	USA	716-225-5810
Copperhead Technologies	Schenectady	NY	USA	518-346-3894
Tronix Micro Systems	Sloan	NY	USA	716-668-8176
Paxtron Corporation	Spring Valley	NY	USA	914-578-6522
Software Link, Inc.	White Plains	NY	USA	914-683-2512
Bartha Visual, Inc.	Columbus	OH	USA	614-291-4585
Compuquick Media Center	Columbus	OH	USA	614-235-1180
Neather Realm Software	Cuyahoga Falls	OH	USA	216-928-1738
B&J Video Systems	Findlay	OH	USA	419-424-0903
Industrial Video, Inc.	Lorain	OH	USA	216-233-4000
Penguin Music Store #3	Toledo	OH	USA	419-882-0961
Clackamas Computers	Clackamas	OR	USA	503-650-0379
Magic Box, Inc.	Corvallis	OR	USA	541-752-5654
Computer Users	Springfield	OR	USA	541-726-8500
Computer Discount Center	Erie	PA	USA	814-899-6437
New York Camera & Video	Feasterville	PA	USA	215-322-9743
British Magazine Dist., Inc.	Hermitage	PA	USA	412-962-1218
The Lerro Corporation	Norristown	PA	USA	610-650-4100
CDR Systems	Pittsburgh	PA	USA	412-351-1700
Mega Bytes	Pittsburgh	PA	USA	412-653-9050
J&C Repair	Rockton	PA	USA	814-583-5838
Electronic Connection	West Reading	PA	USA	610-372-1010
Kasara Microsystems	Hilton Head	SC	USA	803-842-5058
Via Video Interaction	Knoxville	TN	USA	423-687-4328
Opus 2 Audio & Video	Memphis	TN	USA	901-684-5467
Computer Ease	Corpus Christi	TX	USA	512-882-2275
Metropolitan Computer Products	Dallas	TX	USA	214-702-9119
On Video, Inc.	Dallas	TX	USA	214-406-9292
Microsearch	Houston	TX	USA	713-988-2818
Computer Wise, Inc.	Logan	UT	USA	801-752-2500
Digitechnix	Blue Ridge	VA	USA	540-982-1672
Dewberry's Computers & Supplies	Danville	VA	USA	804-799-0502
Whitlock Group, The	Richmond	VA	USA	804-273-9100
Spectral Multimedia, Inc.	Bellevue	WA	USA	206-451-4075
Amiga Northwest Studio	Bothell	WA	USA	206-488-5664
Computer Concepts	Bothell	WA	USA	206-481-3666
MS Digital	Edmonds	WA	USA	206-742-7051
Envision PC Consulting	Lynnwood	WA	USA	206-469-6775
Omni International Trading	Seattle	WA	USA	206-217-0607
Zipperware	Seattle	WA	USA	206-223-1107
Camera Corner, Inc.	Green Bay	WI	USA	414-435-5353
Images in Motion, Inc.	Waukesha	WI	USA	414-798-9400
Safe Harbor	Waukesha	WI	USA	800-544-6599
Taylor Pro Audio / Video	Wauwatosa	WI	USA	414-778-0944
Computer & Supply Co., Inc.	Charleston	WV	USA	304-345-3490

•AC•

(continued from page 48)

Why didn't Commodore know any of these things? Their inaction, insensitivity and, yes, ignorance helped to drive dozens of the top developers under, or making haste to other platforms. Ah, but enough of that. Breathe easy. Say "Escom" over and over in a mantra while staring at the digital mandala on the wall.

Escom

They love us, they love us not, they love us, they,.. It isn't enough that Escom has saved the Amiga and its technology for users on this side of the great watery divide (OK, the Atlantic). It isn't enough because so few people are aware of it. I talk to dozens of computer artists, animators, and software developers every week. Many of them think that Commodore is somehow still at the helm.

If Escom is to attract new North American users in its marketing projections, it has to initiate a dedicated advertising campaign here, and the sooner the better. The lack of doing that was a major factor in Commodore's demise. I hope Escom knows better. Getting all of the old-time Amiga users to upgrade and to support the coming newer hardware will not be enough. We need virgin minds. Besides, most of the old timers are tapped out.

What trees do they plant?

The one thought that has kept returning to me over the last ten years does not really have to do with the Amiga specifically, but computer art and animation, as well as all forms of new age creativity, in general.

When the Chicago riots took place around the Democratic convention in Chicago in 1968, a Japanese American artist asked the question I used to head this paragraph,.. "What trees do they plant?" In a way, I want to ask that question of all of you who are now and have been involved with this digital tool over the last years, "what are you doing with it, besides getting radiation burn."

As far as the Amiga is concerned, I am sure that some of you are using the new technology for income purposes, creating logos for broadcast, artwork for friends, or just relaxing when you have time for delving into your own creativity. But just as the Chicago riots had a positive side (initiating political change and retrospection) and a negative side (for many, an escapist escapade), so this decade of digital mania has its own light and dark aspects.

I have already mentioned some of the positive ways that the technology can be and is being used, but what about the darker? What about those individuals with no recourse to human interaction, no social skills, whose addiction to the trance inducing capabilities of 3D virtual worlds robs the whole population of their participation in the human tribe? How many people do you know who have lost touch with lovers and spouses, having substituted the light from a CRT tube?

The answer for me, reflecting upon my deep immersion in the technology and the Amiga over these last ten years, is that a balance must be struck in order that health and healthy creative attitudes are nurtured and maintained. That balance has two parts, one relating to the computer and the other to anything but.

As far as computing (Amiga computing in this case) is concerned, I would advise you to do something with your collection of technological toys that enhances and contributes to the human community. That means to consciously seek an outreach that helps or at least makes contact with others, a more human physical internet that requires your person in the world.

Become a Guttenberg, and allow your creative work to reach other eyes, hands and minds. Do video exhibits, gallery shows, performances of your MIDI music. Reach out with the technology. Go into the schools with what you love to do and help to teach others.

The second part may seem a bit seditious in a computer magazine, but I think it is vital. Get out of your workroom once in a while. Take a walk, garden, visit your friends, play with your children.

Hemmingway suggested that the writer authoring books about bull fighting needed to go to a bull fight. I am stretching the metaphor somewhat by suggesting that if you want to create artwork, animations, or music that touches a human audience, you need to be touched by human concerns.

Get out of your workroom once in a while. Take a walk, garden, visit your friends, play with your children.

Jay Miner, the father of the Amiga, who I was fortunate enough to hear speak at an Amiga convention years back, admonished the audience to do the same. He was involved in concerns for Public Television, freedom and creativity all of his adult life.

Get involved in other pursuits in addition to your obsession with the Amiga. Then the work that you do on your Amiga or any other tool you wield will contribute to a better world in the next ten years, and for a long time to come.

•AC•

Please Write to:
Shamms Mortier
c/o Amazing Computing
P.O. Box 2140
Fall River, MA 02722-2140

FEEDBACK

Saving Money on CD Drives, Zip Drive testimonial, and catching the next wave with ESCOM

Dear AC,

I'm a subscriber to your mag and naturally turned to you when I needed to get the word out about something.

I own an A500 with a Supra 500XP SCSI hard drive and I've wanted to mount an external, low-cost SCSI CD ROM but couldn't find an item to fit the bill. Well, recently I ran across an ad in a catalog for Damark International in Minnesota, describing a 2x portable unit from Media Vision. I bought the item and found that it fit the bill perfectly. I've been using it every day for three months.

Lately, I've seen ads in the English mags for Power Computing, First Computer Center, and others selling this same machine for £129-£199, so this is a deal here at $107 delivered! But how many Amiga owners here in the U.S. are aware of its existence or where to get it from? Damark's toll-free order number is 1-800-827-6767; their customer service number for info is 1-800-697-2002. I hope that other Amiga users will be able to access this fantastic deal.

Sincerely,
Kenneth E. Lizotte

Thanks for the suggestion.

Dear Sir,

It has been almost 10 years since I bought my original Amiga 1000. Since then I have seen many disappointments and setbacks to the Amiga line under Commodores' aegis. Now with ESCOM in charge, I can finally see the light at the end of the tunnel getting brighter instead of the dim flickering (bordering on extinction) I have seen for the last two years. With new Amigas being produced and a team dedicated to their promotion I think that we finally have a good chance to win back the market share that was gradually lost to other much less capable platforms.

The road to recovery is going to be a hard one to negotiate, however. Other manufacturers have quietly been chuckling as they weaned weary Amiga owners away to their product lines. When the opposite starts happening and their customers convert to Amigas the fur will start to fly. With a current market share of around 1%, Amigas have nowhere to go but up, and this means the other manufacturers have to go down with all things being equal. This makes the Amiga line an inconvenience to them in the short term and a direct threat to their interests in the long term. I would not be surprised if toward the end of 1996, verbal sparring will be well under way in the major clone publications.

What the "heavies" used to be able to ignore, will surely come back to haunt them as time goes on. The introduction of computers with similar sounding names like Aptiva, and Ambra will actually help promote Amiga lines. In the end, you will know that the Amiga line is seen as a contender the day Microsoft announces an Amiga software development division!

In order to start the promotion of Amigas off correctly I would like to relate an experience I had recently. A friend invited me over to show off his new system. It was a 586/100Mhz IBM system with 4X speed CD-ROM, 2GB Hard drive, 16 Megs RAM, Windows '95 and Soundblaster sound card installed. The first program he showed me was the latest *Wing Commander* release. It looks like a great game machine...

Simon Parkinson

Dear AC,

I found a recent article by R. Shamms Mortier to be both interesting and amusing. However, there are a couple of points in which I believe lie some confusion.

In the article, he mentions that he would like to connect Zip drives to the Amigas in the group, but that Iomega doesn't make any Amiga interfacing hardware for the Amiga. I'm not sure what Mr. Mortier means. I do believe that the Amiga is fully capable of using a SCSI Zip (or other removable media) drive with no additional hardware or software. I'm assuming that he means the parallel port version of the Zip drive, but since SCSI is so common, and relatively affordable, on the Amiga, there should be nothing stopping him from connecting Zips to the Amigas (unless the expansion capabilities are all used up).

Second, at the end of the article, he mentions that the use of a PowerPC processor in the new Amigas should allow them to run MS-DOS and Windows. I do not believe this is the case. There is no version of MS-DOS or Windows95 that will run on PowerPC processors. The new Amigas will be able to, at best, run PReP and maybe CHRP software, which does include Windows NT, but not Windows95. They would also be able to run such excellent operating systems as AIX (IBM's UNIX), and Solaris (Sun's UNIX, and in my opinion, the best UNIX available). This would also include the MacOS if the Power Amigas are CHRP machines.

In my opinion, Sun is the only company truly set up to dislodge Microsoft from their throne, and if Solaris can be priced a bit more competitively (currently the street price for Solaris is around $400 to $500), and made to run on all the major platforms, it has a chance of taking a serious dent out of Windows' market share. A CHRP Amiga would help to reach this goal. Maybe we can topple this giant yet!

Sincerely,
Matthew J. Harrell

We have heard from several Amiga owners who have used the SCSI Zip drive with great results. 100 MB of removable disk space for as little as $14.00 is something that 'moves' all of us. •AC•

Please Write to:
FeedBack
c/o Amazing Computing
P.O. Box 2140
Fall River, MA 02722-2140

What trees do they plant?

Personal Commentary
by R. Shamms Mortier

As my grandmother would have said if she were around to witness my dance with the Amiga over the last ten years, "what a strange trip it's been!". As I try to dredge up memories that answer the perennial "where were you when" questions, snippets of vaporous recollections drift into view. The first Amiga memory I have goes back to the time it was introduced. I was giving a presentation at the local Commodore User's Group club (yes, Virginia, they did exist). The presentation was on C-64 graphics, and a query aimed in my direction from someone in the group pierced my concentration.

Shamms Mortier is a teacher, writer, philosopher, artist, musician, and an Amiga enthusiast. Mr. Mortier's articles have appeared in the major Amiga magazines and he is currently an Associate Editor for Amazing Computing.

"What about the Amiga? Don't you think it's a better bet than the C-64, and aren't you going to get one soon?".

My reply was given in the heat of the financial moment. "No! It's way too expensive. I have no need for an expensive toy". I'm not even sure I knew what the Amiga was at that point, but I wanted to sound knowledgeable and authoritative. Two weeks later I had a C-128. Remember them? I hardly ever used mine, and I finally sold it in 1992. Two months later, I had my first Amiga.

Like many other digital obsessives, I was completely swayed by the Juggler animation. Someone I knew had an Amiga 1000, and when I saw that animation, I could feel the lust in my heart taking over.

The Amiga 1000 to 2000

Remember the 1000's. I still have hulks of two of them. In Vermont, everyone keeps a Chevy or ten in the back lot for parts. Where I imagine I will use A-1000 parts at this point is beyond me, but I can't accept the thought that all of that money and love I put into those 1000's was for naught. The universe has got to be more fair and balanced than that.

Next came my A-2000's. The plurality means two, one for home and the other for the University where I worked. It took me months to convince them that the Amiga would be a viable graphics engine for my work as manager of the Media Service department. They wanted me to buy a computer with a name, and not the name Commodore either. I had already purchased an IBM some years before, and even after thousands of dollars in upgrading it, all I could get were 16 color jagged graphics. I promised that the Amiga would make all of us look better. It did.

Over the years, I have added another 2000, a 3000 Tower (at a bargain price when they went on sale), and finally, my Amiga 4000. They have all been souped up over the years with RAM, peripherals, and whatever else I could buy or trade.

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Commodore

I have lived with my Amiga long enough to harbor very angry feelings towards Commodore. After all, most of the multimedia capacities exhorted by other platform vendors today were started on the Amiga years ago. Even though it lacks the speed of the latest processors at the moment, you still can't match it for solid video work in many cases. Its surprisingly small quantity of RAM required for the operating system makes PC and MAC users incredulous, and the Amiga has had full screen animation running at 30 or even 60 frames a second without a problem for years.

(continued on page 46)

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